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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2004

Palestinians grieve over loss of leader



Yasser Arafat

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'We're still here ... still doing our job'

Vietnam vets serving in Iraq team up for Black Hawk mission to mark Veterans Day

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Nine Vietnam veterans pose for a photo Thursday before carrying out a mission in Iraq. The group joined together as a "sort of memorial" for Veterans Day.
RON JENSEN/Stars and Stripes

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY HOUSTON RUCK
Stars and Stripes

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Big Dig leaks: State Attorney General Thomas F. Reilly said his office wants to know whether water accumulating on the underground roof of the Big Dig tunnels could damage the \$14.6 billion roadway project, and who should be blamed for more than 400 leaks in the tunnel system.

As early as 1999, contractors on the costliest highway project in U.S. history knew that serious construction flaws existed in the walls of the tunnels directing traffic under downtown Boston, according to documents cited by project officials.

Reilly, who said his investigation into the leaks has just begun, promised to hold Big Dig contractors and managers responsible for the problem. Big Dig officials earlier said the public would not have to pay for tunnel repairs.

Elizabeth Edwards' biopsy: A biopsy has shown that a lump in Elizabeth Edwards' breast mass not spread, a family spokesman said, as the wife of former Democratic vice presidential candidate John Edwards commenced chemotherapy.

After a 16-week chemotherapy course, Edwards will take a four- to six-week break. Georgetown University Medical Center doctors who are treating Edwards will then surgically remove the lump.

As a safety precaution, however, doctors will remove some of her healthy lymph node tissue. Edwards will then undergo radiation.

World

Nigeria fuel strike: A Nigerian high court on Thursday blocked an upcoming general strike meant to shut down oil exports in the world's seventh-largest exporter.

Nigeria's unions — including blue- and white-collar oil worker guilds — had called the strike for Tuesday and said this one would target oil production and exports, unlike other recent strikes that mainly targeted businesses in the country.

The appeal hearing would resume next Wednesday, said Justice Tanko Mohammed Yusuf, who ordered a stay on union action until a final ruling in the case.

Kashmir troop withdrawal: India's prime minister on Thursday ordered reduction of troops in the Indian-controlled portion of Kashmir, saying a decline in separatist violence in the Himalayan region prompted the decision.

"In recognition of the improvement in the situation, the government has decided to reduce the deployment of troops this winter," Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said in a statement that came days ahead of his first official visit to the strife-torn Indian state.

One of Singh's top aides said the order is aimed at helping the peace process with Pakistan and must be seen as another confidence-building measure by the Indian government.

Police raid in Sudan: Just hours after the government agreed to a peace deal Tuesday aimed at ending violence in Darfur, Sudanese police arrived at this battered camp in the middle of the night, beating residents with wooden poles, bulldozing and burning shelters, and firing tear gas into a health clinic, residents and aid workers reported.

The assault capped a series of often-violent government raids over the past week, aimed at relocating residents to new camps. It also came despite international condemnation of the raids and requests from the United Nations and the Bush administration that displaced families not be forcibly moved to new locations.

The U.N. Security Council is to hold a



JOE GROMELSKI/Stars and Stripes

Veterans Day remembrance: John Odey of Pittsburgh pauses at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., before Thursday's Veterans Day ceremony.

meeting in Nairobi next week to discuss the crisis in Sudan. The panel could impose sanctions on the Khartoum government if it funds serious abuses of civilians have taken place.

SARS vaccine: A SARS vaccine is unlikely to be available soon because few drug companies want to invest in a product that may have no demand without another major outbreak, said a Hong Kong researcher who has worked on a vaccine.

Of at least 16 possible SARS vaccines developed worldwide, only one has been picked up by a drug company, in China, where it's an early testing phase, said University of Hong Kong microbiologist Yuen Kwok-yung.

Dutch filmmaker's slaying: Arsonists set fire to a school and attempted to burn down two churches in the Netherlands, the latest in a series of attacks following the murder of a Dutch filmmaker by a suspected Muslim radical, police said Thursday. There were no injuries.

A total of 20 religiously-linked sites have been targeted for attacks since filmmaker Theo van Gogh was shot and stabbed to death on Nov. 2 on an Amsterdam street. The chief suspect in his case, 26-year-old Mohammed Bouyeri, is being held in custody on charges of murder and terrorism.

Japan earthquake: A magnitude 6.3 earthquake rocked the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido on Thursday. There were no immediate reports of injuries or damage.

The 7:03 p.m. jolt was centered 19 miles under the earth's surface off the coast of Kushiro, about 550 miles northwest of Tokyo, the Meteorological Agency said.

There was no danger of tsunami, or ocean waves caused by seismic activity, the agency said. The town of Kushiro-cho was closest to the center of the quake, but local officials said there had been no reports of damage in the town.

Chechen rebel group trial: A Russian court convicted eight former members of a Chechen rebel group on Thursday in connection with an armed incursion into neighboring Dagestan last year that killed nine border guards.

The men, who were allegedly followers of slain Chechen warlord Ruslan Gelayev, were found guilty of being members of an illegal armed group, the murder of border

guards, illegally crossing the border and carrying weapons. They were sentenced to prison terms ranging from six to 20 years.

Two of the men — Khasan Khadzhiyev and Magomed Umashev — were sentenced to 20 years in prison. Lechi Magomadov received 15 years, and the rest were given from six to 7½ year terms. All denied their guilt, saying their only desire was to maintain Chechnya's independence.

Assassination trial: Military personnel accused in two failed assassination attempts against Pakistan's President Gen. Pervez Musharraf will be tried by a military court soon, an official said Thursday.

Al-Qaida-linked terrorists tried to blow up Musharraf's motorcade twice in December 2003 on a road near the capital, Islamabad. The president escaped unhurt, but in the second attack, 17 people were killed.

Security agencies have arrested an unknown number of civilians and some low-ranking army and air force officials on suspicion of their links with those who masterminded and executed the attacks.

Swedish official's murder: The mental health of the man who confessed to killing Foreign Minister Anna Lindh was debated in an all-day closed session of the Supreme Court on Thursday as medical experts gave conflicting views on whether he should be in prison or psychiatric care.

Final arguments in the last murder trial of Mijailo Mijailovic, convicted of fatally stabbing Lindh in a Stockholm department store in September 2003, were postponed until Friday. If Mijailovic remains in psychiatric care, he could be in a secure facility for as long as 20 years — or get out sooner on a doctor's recommendation.

Kidnapped foreigners: The United Nations appealed Thursday to the Taliban-linked kidnappers of three of its staff in Afghanistan to release them in time for a Muslim festival starting this weekend.

Militants claiming to hold the three foreigners say the Afghan government has agreed to free 26 of their jailed comrades as part of a prisoner exchange.

However, officials have yet to confirm any deal with the kidnappers. Philippine diplomat Angelito Nayan, British-Irish Annetta Flanigan, and Sheikh Heibeh of Kosovo were abducted at gunpoint in Kabul on Oct. 28.

Stories from The Associated Press

U.S. launches major attack in south Fallujah

Coalition fights Mosul uprising; Car bomb kills 17 in Baghdad

The Associated Press

FALLUJAH, Iraq — U.S. forces backed by an air and artillery barrage launched a major attack Thursday into the southern half of Fallujah, trying to choke Sunni fighters in a shrinking cordon. The U.S. military estimated 600 insurgents have been killed in the offensive but said success in the city won't break Iraq's insurgency.

The Fallujah campaign has also sent a stream of American wounded to the military's main hospital in Europe. Planes carrying just over 100 bloodied and broken troops were arriving Thursday at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, a day after 64 others were brought in.

The large number of wounded sent to Germany suggests that fighting may be more intense, at least in some areas, than the U.S. military had initially indicated.

Violence escalated dramatically in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul amid a campaign by guerrillas this week to step up attacks elsewhere to divert troops from Fallujah.

U.S. deaths in Fallujah rise to 18

The Associated Press

NEAR FALLUJAH, Iraq — Eighteen U.S. troops and five Iraqi government soldiers have been killed in action since the start of the assault on Fallujah, the U.S. commander of the operation said Thursday.

Maj. Gen. Richard Natonski, commander of the 1st Marine Division, also said 69 American service members and 34 Iraqi troops had been wounded since the assault began Monday against insurgents in the Sunni Muslim stronghold.

Natonski said the operation was "ahead of schedule" and he saluted "the soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines and our Iraqi comrades" taking part in the fight.

"Today our forces are conducting deliberate clearing operations within the city, moving house to house, building to building looking for arms caches, insurgents," he said.

Guerrillas attacked police stations in Mosul, overwhelming several, and U.S. and Iraqi troops were trying to put them down, the military said. The city governor was looking to neighboring provinces for police reinforcements, as gunfire and explosions echoed across the city.

In Baghdad, a car bomb ripped through a crowded commercial street, killing 17 people, police said — the second deadly car bomb in the capital in as many days.

Since Monday, U.S. and Iraqi troops have been fighting their way through the northern half of Fallujah, reaching the east-west highway that bisects the city and battling pockets of fighters trapped in the north while other insurgents fell back into the south.

Air and artillery barrages pummeled the southern districts through the day, U.S. soldiers and Marines launched their main assault across the central highway into the southern half, the military said.

Sunni fighters in the city appear to be trying desperately to break open an escape route through the U.S.-Iraqi cordon closing off the city's southern exits, commanders said. Insurgent mortar fire and attacks have focused on bridges and roads out of the city more than on U.S. troops descending from the north, they said.

Commanders say that since the offensive began, their seal around the city has been tight and that fighters stay inside for the chance of escape. Some 15,000 U.S. and Iraqi troops are involved in the cordon and the assault inside the city.

U.S. military officials cautioned that the figure of 600 insurgents killed in Fallujah was only a rough estimate. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Richard Myers, said Thursday that "hundreds and hundreds of insurgents" have been killed and captured.

Commanders had said before the offensive began that 1,200 to 3,000 fighters were believed holed up in the city. But the speed of the U.S. advance has led some officers on the ground to conclude that many guerrillas abandoned the city before the attack so they could fight elsewhere.

The number of civilian casualties in the city is not known. Most of the city's 200,000-300,000 residents are thought to have fled before the offensive.

according to an Associated Press count. Six were members of the Marine Corps Reserve, two were Army National Guard Reserve and two were Army Reserve.

More U.S. troops were killed Tuesday, but details of their service affiliations are incomplete.

Nine is the highest number of part-time soldiers and Marines to have died in Iraq



U.S. Marines of the fifth division take cover as they push into the center of Fallujah, Iraq, on Thursday.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Wednesday, at least 1,149 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to Associated Press and Defense Department counts. At least 877 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said.

The figures include three military civilians. The British military has reported 74 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 13; Spain, 11; Ukraine, nine; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary and Latvia have reported one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,011 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 768 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

Since the start of U.S. military operations in Iraq, 4,858 U.S. servicemembers have been wounded in hostile action, according to the Defense Department's weekly tally.

for the offensive. The rest have been hunkered down in their homes without electricity during days of heavy barrages, with food supplies reported low.

Myers, speaking on NBC's "Today" show, called the offensive "very, very successful."

But he acknowledged that guerrillas will move their fight elsewhere. "If anybody thinks that Fallujah is going to be the end of the insurgency in Iraq, that was never the objective, never our intention, and even never our hope."

"There has always been pockets of resistance in this type of fighting, just like there was in World War II — we would claim an island is secure and fight them for months after that," Marine Capt. John Griffin said in Fallujah. "Claiming the city is secure doesn't actually mean that all the resistance is gone, it just means that we have secured the area and have control."

Two U.S. Marine Super Cobra attack helicopters were hit by ground fire and forced to land in separate incidents near Fallujah, the military said Thursday. The

crews were not injured and were rescued.

In the northern half of Fallujah, an Iraqi commander reported the discovery of "hostage slaughterhouses" in which foreign captives had been killed. Documents of hostages were found, along with CDs showing beheadings and the black clothes of kidnappers, he said.

Meanwhile, rebels have continued heavy attacks elsewhere in a campaign of violence meant to divert troops from Fallujah and show they can keep up the fight even if their strongest bastion falls.

believes that detailed information is of potential value to the insurgent forces they are battling in the Sunni Arab city.

National Guard and Reserve troops have played a prominent role in Iraq from the start of combat in 2003, and their numbers have grown in recent months. They now make up more than 40 percent of the total U.S. force in Iraq. There is no information on how many are now in Fallujah.

More reservists have died in Fallujah than any other part of Iraq war

BY ROBERT BURNS

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — More Army and Marine reservists have died in Iraq since the start of the Fallujah offensive than in any comparable period since American forces entered Iraq in March 2003.

At least nine reservists died on Monday,

Perilous day for troops in the Danger zone

Attacks rain on Task Force Danger's sector during 24-hour period in Iraq

By STEVE LIEWER
Stars and Stripes

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MACKENZIE, Iraq — After a quiet early October, Task Force Danger's sector of Iraq is living up to its name.

During the 24-hour period ending at 4 p.m. Wednesday, the zone's West Virginia-sized area north and east of Baghdad that stretches from Kirkuk south to Balad, and east to the Iranian border — recorded 48 attacks from roadside bombs, rocket-propelled grenades and mortars. One 1st ID soldier was killed when his convoy struck a roadside bomb near Balad.

That was the most attacks in a single day since the 1st Infantry Division took control of the zones from the 4th Infantry Division in March. Attacks in the Danger zone have averaged about 100 per week, according to statistics compiled by the 1st ID's intelligence section.

"It's been an interesting day across Danger," said Lt. Col. Jim Chevallier, commander of the 1st ID's 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, at his nightly staff meeting Wednesday.

Eight of the attacks took place in the 1-4 Cavalry's Delaware-sized sector northeast of Samarra, said Capt. Scott Synovitz, 30, of Pinehurst, N.C., the unit's intelligence officer. That compares with an average of five to six per day before the late-September sweep to clear terrorists from Samarra, and fewer than three per day since.

Two nearly simultaneous attacks just



A young Iraqi soldier, his face a mask of pain, rides away from the aid station at Forward Operating Base MacKenzie in the back of an 203rd Iraqi National Guard Brigade truck with the bagged body of one of his comrades.

after noon Tuesday on a joint U.S.-Iraqi patrol and on a traffic-control checkpoint in the restive city of Ad Duhaybiy killed one Iraqi soldier and injured five Americans from two engineer units. A rocket-propelled grenade attack on a checkpoint at 5:24 p.m. injured three 1-4 Cavalry soldiers.

Only one of the wounded — a soldier with a broken leg — was hurt badly enough to be evacuated to Germany, Synovitz said.

On Wednesday a powerful 107 mm rocket struck inside FOB MacKenzie, the second one to hit the camp in a week. Neither caused injury, but both were close enough to the command post that soldiers outdoors were told to take cover.

The upswing in attacks is not unexpected, Synovitz said. This week is the last and most religiously significant week of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan. Monday was

the "Day of Power," following which Muslims believe prayers — or, to some extremists, acts of martyrdom — are more powerful.

"Everything you do is amplified," Synovitz said.

The attack on Fallujah, about 50 miles southwest of MacKenzie, also has created an expected ripple effect as insurgents battle the U.S.-Iraqi assault there. During last spring's unsuccessful assault on the rebel stronghold, Synovitz said, attacks in the Danger zone spiked upward.

A third factor is the upcoming elections, for which candidate and voter registration recently began. Coalition leaders assume insurgents will try to disrupt them and are keeping most 1st ID and 1st Cavalry Division troops in Iraq through January as a precaution.

Given the convergence of circumstances, Synovitz said, this Ramadan still has been relatively peaceful. Daily attacks remain below levels of a year ago, and deaths across the country are slightly below last year's for the same holiday month.

"It's been quieter than we expected, until the last couple of days," Synovitz said. "Once Ramadan ends, I see it getting a bit calmer."

The violence is nowhere near the levels to the south and west. Twenty-seven of 32 U.S. combat deaths reported during November have been in Baghdad, Fallujah or the Marine-patrolled Al Anbar and Babil provinces south and west of there.

E-mail Steve Liewer at: liewers@mail.strips.osd.mil

'At least we've got survivability'

Nine Vietnam vets serving in Iraq team up for Veterans Day mission

By RON JENSEN
Stars and Stripes

LOGISTICAL SUPPORT AREA ANACONDA, Iraq — They fought in a war that ended 30 years ago, but now find themselves fighting another one, alongside soldiers young enough to be their children.

Or grandchildren.

A group of veterans of the Vietnam War who have joined their country's latest fray marked Veterans Day Thursday by making up the crew of two Black Hawk helicopters and executing a mission.

It is not unusual for the Vietnam vets to fly down in Iraq, but they have never flown a mission made up of so many veterans of that war. Nine of the 10 crew members on the two aircraft were in Vietnam.

The 10th, Sgt. Jose Perez, a crew chief, is the grandson of a Vietnam vet.

"It's an honor," Perez said before the mission Thursday morning. "I'm doing this for my grandfather. He lives in Puerto Rico."

The nine veterans had combined for more than 8,000 hours of combat flying in the war. Their time in Southeast Asia ranged

from 1968 to 1971.

The idea for the mission came from Chief Warrant Officer 4 Mike Chapman, 55, who flew UH-1 gunships in Vietnam for the 92nd Assault Helicopter Company and is now with the Louisiana National Guard's 244th Command Aviation Battalion.

"I think it's a good thing," he said of the mission, which was to fly personnel to Fallujah. "It depicts that we're still here and we're still doing our job. We still have full dedication to God, duty and country."

The helicopters that went on the mission were from the 1st Battalion, 106th Aviation Regiment and the 1st Battalion, 244th Aviation Regiment.

When these veterans first flew in combat more than three decades ago, the concept of using helicopters in battle still was new. They set up on the frontier of that entire strategy.

Now, the Army is more likely to enter combat without helmets than helicopters, thanks, in part, to the aircraft's success in Vietnam.

Staff Sgt. Bona Dyal, who was a crew chief on a UH-1 in Vietnam, is now with the Florida National Guard.



RON JENSEN/Stars and Stripes

Helicopter crew members listen to a pre-mission briefing Thursday at Logistical Support Area Anacanda, Iraq, given by Chief Warrant Officer 4 Mike Chapman, right. Nine Vietnam War veterans were part of the two crews to mark Veterans Day. The 10th member of the crews is the grandson of a Vietnam veteran.

"It means a whole lot," he said of the mission. "At least we've got survivability."

It is hard to compare today's soldiers with those of Vietnam, he said, because of the different technology and training. One thing, however, hasn't changed.

"[Soldiers] still got the same heart," Dyal said.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 John Wyatt Jr., 57, who was an air cavalry captain in Vietnam, said the biggest difference between the two wars is the lessened threat level in Iraq.

In Vietnam, "if you made it past 30 days, you were consid-

ered a veteran," he said.

In Iraq, the threat from enemy fire is minimal. He said he expects to leave without having lost a single soldier in his unit. That was unheard of in Vietnam.

Of Thursday's flight, he said, "It's sort of a memorial for the ones that are no longer flying because they can't or they didn't make it home from Vietnam."

There was little time for talk as Chapman, Dyal, Wyatt and the other six veterans — Chief Warrant Officer 4 John Lanning, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Richard Erickson, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Don Berres, Chief Warrant Offi-

cer 3 Ben Roche, Command Sgt. Maj. Wayne Eden and 1st Sgt. William Wellmon — joined Perez for a pre-mission briefing and then rushed to their choppers.

They did, however, stop to pose for a group shot as a memento of the day, kidding one another about gray hair and no hair as they formed two lines.

Despite the wrinkles and the signs of age, the men are fit and ready to fly. They are doing one-year tours in Iraq just like their younger brethren.

"It's a country worth fighting for," Wyatt said.

E-mail Ron Jensen at: jensen@mail.strips.osd.mil

Good will be building as troops work on Djibouti projects

BY CHARLIE COON
Stars and Stripes

DIJBOUTI CITY, Djibouti — Doors are being hung on the girls' toilets at Charles Facoud school so they can have privacy when they use the bathroom. It's one of the little jobs that the U.S. military hopes will pay big dividends.

"A lot of times the girls won't attend school because of this," said Marine Maj. Jeff Johnson, director of the engineering office at Combined Joint Task Force — Horn of Africa at Camp Lemonier.

Johnson's troops aren't sponsoring big projects here but are doing a lot of little ones, such as roofs, lights, doors and painting. They're putting Djiboutians, Kenyans and Ethiopians to work and helpfully making some long-term friends in the war on terrorism.

Asked if he felt it was a good



Johnson



Mercer

use of taxpayer money, Air Force 1st Lt. Chris Mercer, one of the engineers, replied in the affirmative.

"It's phenomenal," Mercer said.

"Economically, politically and socially, this is the best dollar-for-dollar return the U.S. government could get, in my opinion. The things we do here influence a lot of people in subtle ways."

The work tries to address common-sense needs.

An incinerator is being installed at the Dar El Hanan maternity clinic so a mother's medical wastes after birth can be burned instead of tossed into the trash.

A wall is being built around Balbala school to make it hard for vandals and thieves to get inside. "We're very happy to be working with the Americans," said Hassan Yusuf, a contractor from Djibouti City.

"As long as they're helping build the school for the kids, while also the money is coming in, we're making two benefits at the same time."

About 1,500 U.S. troops are stationed in Djibouti, a small, strategically important country in eastern Africa located across a narrow strait from the Arabian Peninsula. The U.S. military established a base at Camp Lemonier in May 2003 and mans it with members of the Marines, Army, Navy and Air Force.

The task force does out



An incinerator is being installed at the Dar El Hanan maternity clinic in Djibouti City so medical waste can be burned instead of thrown into the trash. The Combined Joint Task Force — Horn of Africa engineering office is overseeing the project.



Tekesky

\$60,000 to \$120,000 for most jobs, according to Marine Master Sgt. Todd Tekesky, though some are cheaper and some a little more expensive. Jobs usually take between one and four months to complete.

There are 60 projects currently under way in various stages. African contractors pay their workers \$2.50 per hour, the going rate in this part of the continent.

The CJTF-HOA engineering office consists of six engineers and four contracting officers. Their jobs are spread over an

area about the size of half the continental United States.

The African contractors who are hired to do the work must abide by two rules:

They must hire local laborers, and they can't leave behind scrap lumber, unused cement or other debris at the site of a finished job. Besides that, the terms are somewhat looser than in a more modern business climate.

There are no exacting standards to be enforced.

The craftsmanship can be a little rickety, but at least the work is getting done.

"You can't be complex," Tekesky said. "You have to accept that things aren't going to be done to U.S. standards."

Business-as-usual can vary depending on the country or tribe.

In a part of Kenya, for exam-

ple, a tribe might have someone who is "the contractor," so that person is likely going to get the job.

"There is government out to ruffe feathers."

"Kenya is very tribal," Tekesky said, "and they'd prefer to keep it that way."

While projects in Djibouti City benefit certain people, such as a school's students, Mercer said projects out in the African bush make a more vast impact.

"There is government out there — it's all tribal," Mercer said.

"The [projects] we do affect the entire community, the entire tribe. The tribe is their government."

"The relationships we're building out there are doing a tremendous amount of good."

E-mail Charlie Coon at: coon@charliecoon.osd.mil

Terror experts: Al-Qaida focused on more than Iraq

BY FRANK JAMES
Chicago Tribune

WASHINGTON — While President Bush has argued that the U.S. fights terrorism abroad to avoid fighting them at home, Osama bin Laden's re-emergence in a new videotape recently was a chilling reminder of how much bin Laden still wants to wage his international jihad on U.S. soil.

In its way, bin Laden's reappearance cuts against the president's slogan — which was often repeated on the campaign trail but increasingly had been questioned by some observers, from terrorism experts to social commentators, even before the al-Qaida leader's latest video.

"It's very much a reminder from (al-Qaida) that despite all that's going on in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and everywhere else, they are still very much focused on executing an attack here," said Ben Venzeke, chief executive officer of Intel-Center, which monitors terrorist groups and their activities.

Experts agreed that transnational and stateless terrorist groups, with their cells of operatives across the world, are quite ca-

pable of multitasking. "Believe it or not, al-Qaida can actually do two or more things at once," said Venzeke.

"It would be rather silly to think that just because the war began in Iraq that they packed up their entire infrastructure around the world, the support cells and execution cells," he said.

What's more, al-Qaida has demonstrated that it is a patient organization with the ability to plan more than one attack at a time, he said. "It has multiple operations planned and in place over a period of years," said Venzeke, meaning that operations in the planning stages before the United States launched the Iraq war could still be on track.

Also, different al-Qaida members have various capabilities, with some jihadists trained to conduct insurgency and guerrilla operations and others more geared at launching terror attacks in cities, Venzeke said.

Brian Jenkins, a terrorism expert with the Rand Corp., also doesn't believe that the Iraq war has led to the test of evidence.

"The picture it conjures up is that someone the terrorists have to make it through Iraq to get to here, it's a front line," Jenkins

said, noting that administration officials "refer to it as a front line."

"In fact, that is not true geographically," he added. "It is also not supported by what we have seen since 9-11 and since the invasion of Iraq. What we have seen is not only a continuation of significant jihadist attacks worldwide, but in fact at an accelerated pace."

Jenkins ticked off terrorist attacks linked to al-Qaida or affiliated groups since the Iraq war's start, including those in Jakarta, Karachi, Madrid, Istanbul, Riyadh, Casablanca and most recently Egypt. The attacks have occurred at a rate of one every three months, Jenkins said.

True, he added, there has been no terrorist attack in the U.S. since Sept. 11, 2001. That could be because the increased vigilance of the Homeland Security Department and other officials has made the United States a more difficult environment for terrorists, Jenkins observed, acknowledging that experts can only speculate on the exact reasons for an absence of attacks.

In addition, terrorists are communicating more frequently since Sept. 11 and have continued to communicate since the

invasion of Iraq, he said. And not only have they continued to recruit, they have intensified their recruiting.

"Their pace of activity is accelerating. That does not support a notion that they are being blocked by our actions in Iraq, or necessarily being diverted," Jenkins said.

Moreover, some experts found the argument that America is fighting terror abroad to avoid it at home simplistic. "It sounds really great and it's appealing to a domestic audience," said Charles Pena, a defense analyst at the libertarian Cato Institute. "Of course we would rather fight the terrorists abroad than have them here on the streets of Washington, New York, Chicago or anywhere else as they're blowing things up. It's sort of an obvious statement."

"The slogan ... displays a real, to be charitable, under-appreciation of what our problem really is," he said. Pena said it falls short as policy "because the implication is we win this war by killing people. ... We're not dealing with a structure anyway, if we were ever ... We are dealing with a radical Islamist ideology that is infusing itself inside the Muslim world. You don't win by just killing people."

"We will never forsake a fallen soldier"

Army IDs 880 injured GIs for new support program

BY LISA BURGESS

Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — Just seven months into a new Army program to give one-on-one, long-term help to severely injured combat veterans, program officials have identified about 880 soldiers who are potentially eligible for the assistance, according to Col. Robert H. Woods, director of the Army's Human Resources Policy Directorate.

Speaking to reporters Wednesday at the Pentagon, Woods said that the "Disabled Soldier Support System," or DSS3, as the program is called, has conducted interviews with 232 of those 880 soldiers, and is now preparing to hire social workers who will link them with the many government and private programs already in place to assist them.

"We will never forsake a fallen soldier," he said.

DSS3 kicked off in April at the Army's headquarters in the Pentagon, in a joint announcement with Veterans Affairs, which is responsible for the nation's medical care for injured veterans.

The program is geared toward soldiers with a disability rating of

30 percent or greater, including amputees, severe burn cases and other grave injuries received as a result of combat actions after Sept. 11, 2001, Woods said.

DSS3 will team disabled soldiers with an advocate who will monitor the veteran for a minimum of five years, "providing direct support to soldiers and their families as they deal with the initial injury" and later, get on with their lives and careers, whether military or civilian, Woods said.

The program began with \$1 million in start-up funds, but Congress added significantly to that pot in the Pentagon's fiscal 2005 budget, setting aside \$4.5 million in fiscal 2005 for DSS3, according to Col. Jacqueline Cumbo, chief of the Army Human Factors Division.

With that money, program managers are preparing to hire the first of the 47 caseworkers that program managers intend to have in place "by the start of the new year," to assist the pilot group of 232 soldiers, Woods said.

"We're looking for 'gentle giants' who are willing to make phone calls and knock down

doors" when their soldiers run into bureaucratic difficulties, Woods said.

DSS3 officials are aiming for a ratio of one caseworker for every 30 veterans, though that ratio may change as the program matures, Woods said.

The program already has a two-person DSS3 office located at Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington, where virtually all of its eligible participants end up for advanced health care and rehabilitation.

Although the program is still in the developmental stages, some soldiers have already benefited from its efforts, Woods noted.

One of those soldiers is Sgt. Michael Cain, a former transportation specialist with the 4th Infantry Division's 299th Engineers in Tikrit, Iraq.

Cain, a Berlin, Wis., native, said the DSS3 program "has done a damn good job" of helping him since he lost a leg to an anti-tank mine on Aug. 10, 2003.

Cain said he would have died had the fire from the mine's blast not cauterized the blood vessels in his severed right leg before fellow soldiers could "cut the door off to get me out of the vehicle."



PHOTOS BY LISA BURGESS/Stars and Stripes

Left: Col. Robert H. Woods, director of the Army's Human Resources Policy Directorate, said DSS3 has interviewed soldiers and is now preparing to hire social workers who will link them with government and private assistance programs. **Right:** Sgt. Michael Cain, a transportation specialist with the 4th Infantry Division's 299th Engineers in Tikrit, Iraq, said Wednesday that the DSS3 program "has done a damn good job" of helping him since he lost a leg to an anti-tank mine on Aug. 10, 2003.

He was evacuated first to a U.S. military combat support hospital in Baghdad, then to the Army medical center at Landstuhl, Germany, but did not regain consciousness until several days later, when he was at Walter Reed.

Cain was at Walter Reed for three months, during which time members of the DSS3 program assisted in bringing first his parents, then his wife to Fisher House, the residence where relatives of injured servicemembers stay when wounded soldiers are at the hospital, he said.

Cain, who now lives in Gladstone, N.D., with his wife Leslie

and month-old son Desmond, said his experiences at Walter Reed have led him to decide to go to college to become a physical therapist so he can help other amputees.

It is soldiers like Cain, Woods said, that inspire DSS3's staff to keep pushing the program forward.

"Every generation has its heroes," Woods said, adding Cain and those like him "are this generation's heroes."

For more on DSS3, go to: www.ArmyDSS3.org or call (800) 833-6622. Disabled soldiers seeking job leads can go to: www.DSS3soldierconnection.army.mil or e-mail b.burgess@strips.osd.mil

Marine dismissed after conviction in Iraqi POW's death

Major avoids year in prison for Camp White Horse incident

BY SETH HETTENA

The Associated Press

CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. — An officer convicted of dereliction of duty and maltreatment of an Iraqi who died at the prison he commanded was sentenced to be dismissed from the service, despite his pleas to remain in the Marine Corps.

Maj. Clarke Paulus was acquitted Wednesday of the most serious charge of assault and battery.

During the sentencing phase of his court-martial, Paulus held back tears as he stood before the jury and apologized to both the Marine Corps and to his family.

"I hope the press would have these charges reflect on me personally and not the Marine Corps," he said, his voice breaking.

He asked the eight officers on the panel to allow him to remain in the Marine Corps, saying he had served honorably for more than a decade.

Prosecutor Maj. Leon Francis, however, told the jury that the suffering of Nageen Sadoon Hatab "should amount to something."

Paulus' dismissal could take up to several months until all the legal paperwork is completed. He could have been sentenced to a year in military prison.

Paulus, 36, of the Philadelphia suburb of Buckingham, Pa., commanded the Marine de-

tection facility at Camp Whitehorse in southern Iraq. He was accused of ordering a subordinate to drag Hatab by the neck out of a holding cell in June 2003 after the man suffered a bout of diarrhea.

Hatab was stripped naked and left outside for seven hours before he was found dead.

Prosecutors contended Paulus failed to safeguard Hatab's health and welfare and failed to provide him with proper medical care.

Prosecutors contended Paulus failed to safeguard Hatab's health and welfare and failed to provide him with proper medical care.

The prosecutor had asked for a sentence of six months confinement and dismissal from the Marine Corps to set an example that enemy prisoners of war can't be mistreated.

The defense countered that Paulus acted properly under the circumstances. The major believed Hatab was an uncooperative prisoner who was faking illness and deliberately soiled himself, civilian defense attorney Keith Higgins argued.

Higgins said his client was devastated by the jury's decision.

He accused the military of conducting a witch hunt and making an example of Paulus after the Abu Ghraib prison scandal.

Paulus and his family left the courtroom without speaking to reporters.

Hatab, a 52-year-old member of Saddam Hussein's Baath Party, was arrested by Marines who suspected him of a role in an ambush which led to the capture of Pfc. Jessica Lynch, among others.

Abu Ghraib trials moved to Fort Hood

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — The U.S. military announced Thursday that the courts-martial of three Army Reservists charged with abusing Iraqi detainees at Abu Ghraib prison will be transferred from Baghdad to Fort Hood, Texas.

The trials of Sgt. Javal Davis, Spc. Sabrina Harman and Spc. Charles Graner Jr., had been set to begin next year in Baghdad.

No reason was given for the decision to move the trials to the United States. Lawyers for the accused had been pressing for a change of venue for months, in part because of problems bringing witnesses and attorneys to one of the world's most dangerous cities.

The statement said Graner's trial would begin Jan. 7 but gave no dates for the others. Harman is from Lorton, Va.

The Abu Ghraib scandal erupted last spring when photos became public, causing worldwide outrage about the physical abuse and sexual humiliation of inmates.

Most of those charged were in Iraq with the 372nd Military Police Company, based in Maryland.

The scandal generated a worldwide wave of revulsion which raised ques-

tions about the treatment of Muslim prisoners captured not only in Iraq but also in Afghanistan and elsewhere as part of the Bush Administration's war on terror.

The accused claimed they were ordered by Military Intelligence and civilian contractors to "soften up" prisoners for interrogation and that they were unaware of restrictions against harsh treatment laid down in the Geneva Conventions.

However, no one above the rank of staff sergeant has been charged in the case.

Spc. Jeremy C. Svits of Hyndman, Pa., was sentenced to one year in jail and a discharge after pleading guilty in May to three counts. Spc. Armin Cruz, 24, a military intelligence soldier from Plano, Texas, was sentenced to eight months and a discharge for his part in the scandal.

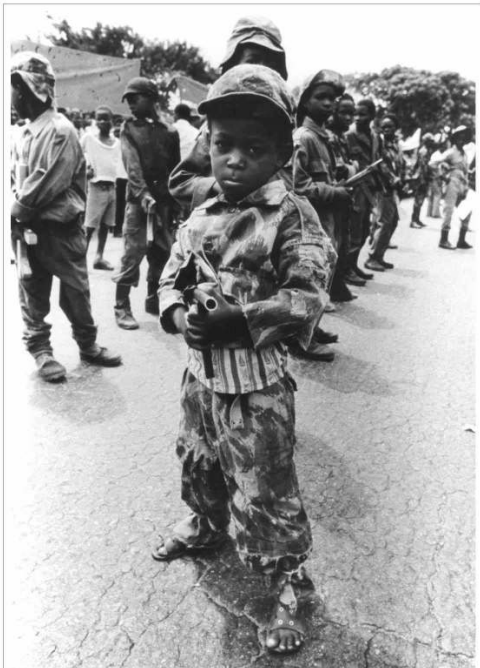
Staff Sgt. Ivan L. "Chip" Frederick II of Buckingham, Va., was sentenced Oct. 21 to eight years in prison after pleading guilty to eight counts — the most severe sentence so far.

Earlier this month, Spc. Megan Ambuhl, 30, of Centerville, Va., pleaded guilty at a summary court-martial in Baghdad to reduced charges of dereliction of duty for failing to prevent or report the maltreatment.

Ambuhl was busted down to a private.

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United Nations/J.P. Laffont

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IN THE WORLD

Palestinian leader Arafat dead at 75

Leader's body flown to Egypt for funeral

BY RAVI NESSMAN
The Associated Press

RAMALLAH, West Bank — Yasser Arafat's body was being flown back to the Mideast for funeral services after French and Palestinian officials honored him Thursday with a ceremony befitting a head of state.

Arafat's widow, Suha, wearing black coat and pants, draped sobs as the Palestinian flag-staffed coffin of her 75-year-old husband was carried off a military helicopter to an official French aircraft. The aircraft then left for Cairo, Egypt, where funeral services will be held Friday.

Arafat, both revered as the champion of Palestinian statehood and reviled as a terrorist, died Thursday morning, spreading spasms of grief among Palestinians and reminding calls for new peace talks with Israel.

Arafat's death marked a turning point in modern Middle East history, leaving the Palestinians without a strong leader for the first time in four decades and arousing fears of a chaotic power struggle that could lead to fighting.

United efforts to protect continuity, the PLO elected former Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas as its new chief, virtually ensuring he will succeed Arafat as leader of the Palestinians, at least for an interim period.

The Palestinian legislature also swore in Parliament Speaker Rauli Patahou as caretaker president of the Palestinian Authority until elections can be held in 60 days, according to Palestinian law.



Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's coffin, draped with the Palestinian flag, is loaded onto a French airplane Thursday to be flown to Cairo, Egypt, at Villacoublay air base northwest of Paris. Arafat died early Thursday at the Percy Military Training Hospital near Paris. He was 75.

Arafat died Thursday at a French military hospital. Neither his doctors nor Palestinian leaders said what killed him.

A wave of grief swept across the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Thousands ran into the streets, clutching his photograph, crying and wondering how they would survive without the man who embodied their struggle for statehood.

"He is our father," Namiya Abu-Saif, 48, said sobbing in the Jebelia refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. "He is Palestine."

Black smoke from burning tires rose across the Gaza Strip and gunmen fired into the air in grief. Fearing the grief could rapidly turn into rioting, Israel quickly moved to seal of the West Bank and Gaza

Strip and increased security at Jewish settlements.

Arafat's body was taken from Percy Military Training Hospital and placed aboard a French army helicopter for a flight to Villacoublay military air base near Paris and a small ceremony involving French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin, Foreign Minister Michel Barnier and Suha Arafat.

From France, the body was flown to Cairo for a Friday morning funeral service to be attended by foreign dignitaries. After the service, Arafat's body will be flown to Ramallah for burial.

Israel's military said West Bank Palestinians would be allowed to attend, though they would have to

Bush: Death is opening for peace in the Middle East

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush says he hopes Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's death will clear the way for successful Mideast peace negotiations with new Palestinian leaders.

"The death of Yasser Arafat is a significant moment in Palestinian history," Bush said Wednesday after Arafat's death in a French hospital.

"We express our condolences to the Palestinian people. For the Palestinian people, we hope that the future will bring peace and the fulfillment of their aspirations for an independent, democratic Palestine that is at peace with its neighbors."

Secretary of State Colin Powell paid tribute to Arafat as "a significant figure in the history of the region and the world, and we know, in the eyes of the Palestinian people."

He said in a statement the United States would do all that it can to further Palestinian statehood.

The State Department, meanwhile, issued a warning to Americans in the Middle East and North Africa that Arafat's death "has the potential to produce destabilizing actions and unrest throughout the region."

pass through checkpoints. Only VIPs will be permitted to come from Gaza, a military official said, adding that Israel had information that terror groups would use the funeral to plan an attack.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who has shunned his long-

time statement urged Americans to "maintain a high level of vigilance."

The first U.S. president to explicitly endorse establishment of a Palestinian state has now held by Israel. Bush renewed that pledge immediately after his re-election last week.

Bush shunned Arafat from the outset of his administration, refusing to invite him to the White House.

He sent Powell to talk to Arafat on the West Bank, but those contacts dwindled and eventually were cut off when the Bush administration concluded Arafat was inept and had not done enough to stop attacks on Israel.

In June 2002, Bush urged the Palestinians to replace Arafat with leaders "not compromised by terror."

In remarks made earlier Wednesday in anticipation of Arafat's death, Bush said: "There will be an opening for peace when leadership of the Palestinian people steps forward and says, 'Here we build a democratic society.'"

Gearing up for new Palestinian leadership, the United States has conveyed its strong support for elections within 60 days of Arafat's death.

time nemesis as a cunning terrorist and obstructionist, said his death can serve as a "historic turning point in the Middle East" and expressed hope the Palestinians would now work to stop terrorism. In a sign of the enmity the two men shared even in death, Sharon refused to mention Arafat by name.

European leaders: Push for peace

The Associated Press

LONDON — European leaders on Thursday saluted Yasser Arafat's devotion to the Palestinian cause, mostly focusing on the positive side of his controversial legacy and expressing hope that his death might create an opportunity to achieve his dream of an independent state.

"With him disappeared the man of courage and conviction who, for 40 years, has embodied the Palestinians' combat for recognition of their national rights," said French President

Jacques Chirac, whose nation hosted the Palestinian leader in his dying days. "May the loss that they have just suffered unite the Palestinians."

British Prime Minister Tony Blair — who is expected to press for a Middle East peace push in his planned meeting with President Bush on Friday in Washington, said Arafat "led his people to an historic acceptance and the need for a two-state solution." He said that was something "we must continue to work tirelessly to achieve."

Palestinian refugees mourn Arafat's passing

BEIRUT, Lebanon — Palestinian refugees scattered in Arab nations greeted word Thursday of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's death with grief, anger and frustration, hosing the man who instilled hope they may one day return home.

From Amman, Jordan, to Damascus, Syria, through the shantytowns of southern Lebanon and into the squallid quarters of Sabra and Chatila camps in Beirut, Palestinians in black marched and wept.

Shouts of "Death to Israel" and "We're returning to Palestine" rang out from the crowds along with volleys of gunfire.

"It feels like I lost a father and a good friend," said 55-year-old Mohammed Sheiba in a cracking voice.

From The Associated Press

BY STEVEN GUTKIN
The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — The death of Yasser Arafat opens doors to chaos and peace. Which it will be depends on whether his successors rein in the bombers, whether Israel returns to negotiations and whether President Bush will throw in his weight.

Both sides face a new situation. Arafat never groomed a successor and any new leadership is likely to seem colorless compared to him, but that could come as a relief to Palestinians more eager for results than drama.

On Israel's side, Arafat's departure deprives Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of his main excuse for not negotiating with the Palestinians. Israel and the United States had long dismissed Arafat as an obstacle to peace, saying he was tainted by terrorism and ambivalent about the Jewish state's right to exist.

Bush's war on terror has suffered from four years of Israeli-Palestinian bloodshed, which

Analysis

has rallied Muslims against the West and fired up jihadis around the world. Now Palestinians are hoping a second-term Bush will tell Israel to task, chiefly over Jewish settlements on Palestinian land.

With his trademark headiness and military garb, Arafat was one of a dying breed — a charismatic, self-proclaimed revolutionary who embodied the Palestinian dream of statehood.

By contrast, the two men expected to wield most power in Palestinian politics — Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia and his predecessor, Mahmoud Abbas — aren't particularly popular, and they likely will need some early successes to gain the credibility and confidence necessary for any peace process.

However, many of the cards are held by Israel, which should make

some gestures, says left-wing Israeli politician Yossi Beilin. He suggests lifting the roadblocks that make daily life tough for Palestinians, releasing prisoners and giving the new Palestinian leadership some breathing room.

Qureia and Abbas "have to be empowered and strengthened by the world and by Israel" so that they can "show that they can deliver the goods," Beilin said.

But the odds will be in power in a few months is uncertain. Presidential elections must be held within 60 days after Arafat's death, according to Palestinian law.

Arafat's Palestinian Authority has been badly weakened by four years of conflict with Israel, and Arafat couldn't stem growing lawlessness in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. If new Palestinian leaders are to succeed where Arafat failed, militant groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad may have to be brought into the system. That could make them less likely to attack Israelis, or they could sense a power vacuum and intensify their violence.

Germans dance in the streets to celebrate Fasching



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

At exactly 11:11 on 11/11 the carnival season, sometimes called the fifth season, got under way. Thousands of celebrants gathered in Mainz, Germany, to kick off the silly season with the traditional Mainz carnival greeting of "Helau!" The climax of the partying is with the big Rose parades on Feb. 7, 2005 and ending the next day, Fat Tuesday.

Smoking ban to take effect in Scotland

The Associated Press

EDINBURGH, Scotland — Scotland will ban smoking in enclosed public places, First Minister Jack McConnell said, confirming an expected move to follow Ireland in enacting a sweeping ban.

McConnell said Wednesday that the legislation would be launched before Christmas, proposing a target date of spring 2006 for full implementation.

Licensees or employers who violated the law would face fines up to \$4,600, and persistent offenders could lose their licenses.

Individual smokers would face fines up to \$1,850. "Too many people smoke, and too many people die or fall ill from cancer, stroke and heart disease," McConnell told the Scottish Parliament. "The single largest cause of preventable premature death in Scotland is smoking."

The British Medical Association, the Royal College of Nursing and the public sector union Unison all supported the ban. The Medical Association said smoking-related diseases kill 13,000 people in Scotland each year.

Operators of pubs and bars, represented by the Scottish Licensed Trade Association, said a ban would cost them business and result in jobs being lost.

Speaking before the Cabinet meeting confirming the decision to ban smoking, Deputy Health Minister Rhona Brankin said politicians had a responsibility to save lives.

"Scotland has one of the worst health reputations in western Europe, with one in four of all death attributable to smoking," she said in an interview with the British Broadcast Corp.

S. Africa to open talks amid unrest in Ivory Coast

Hundreds of foreigners begin to evacuate violence-ridden nation

By PARFAIT KOUASSI
The Associated Press

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast — Airlines shuttled hundreds of trapped foreigners out of the Ivory Coast on Thursday as South African convened urgent peace talks on a crisis that it said threatened to destabilize West Africa.

Residents in the commercial capital, meanwhile, stared hopelessly at the burned-out wreckage of their shops and offices as a measure of calm returned to Abidjan after five days of anti-foreigner mob violence.

France and other nations launched the evacuations Wednesday.

Convoys sent out by the U.S. Embassy and other nations gathered foreigners from their homes while French soldiers in boots plucked some trapped citizens from the banks of Abidjan's lagoons.

A French official has said between 4,000 to 8,000 of its 14,000 citizens wanted to leave, a number that alone would make it one of the largest evacuations of Africa's post-independence era.

The mugmen, checked only intermittently by Gbagbo's government, has been unanimously condemned by his fellow African leaders and drawn moves toward U.N. sanctions. It threatens lasting harm to the economy and stability of Ivory Coast, the world's top cocoa producer and once West Africa's most peaceful and prosperous nation.

South African Foreign Affairs spokesman Ronnie Mameoa said President Thabo Mbeki

would open the talks later Thursday in Pretoria, South Africa.

Ivoirian rebel and opposition leaders, including former Prime Minister Alassane Outtara, were expected to participate, South African Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Aziz Pahad said.

The violence began Saturday when Ivory Coast warplanes killed nine French peacekeepers and an American aid worker in an airstrike on the rebel-held north in three days of government air attacks that violated a more than year-old cease-fire in the country's civil war.

Including the airstrike, the turmoil since Saturday has claimed at least 27 lives and wounded more than 1,000. The toll, likely incomplete, includes the 10 victims of the airstrikes, five loyalists whose bodies were shown on state TV, and 11 loyalists and one Ivoirian security force member treated by hospitals on Monday and Tuesday. Ivory Coast presidential spokesman Alain Tossaint said 37 loyalists had died.

At the request of the United States, Spain will evacuate at least 90 Americans, Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos said.

About 20 Americans landed Wednesday night in Ghana, on a Canadian-organized evacuation flight.

Evacuees also included some U.N. employees and others among 1,500 expatriates holed up at U.N. offices around Abidjan. More than 1,600 others — most of them French, but also citizens of 42 other countries — had taken refuge inside a French military camp.

4,000 inmates escape from Ivory Coast prison

The Associated Press

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast — More than 4,000 inmates of Ivory Coast's largest penitentiary escaped through the sewers amid massive political violence and are believed hiding out in a forest in the middle of Abidjan, officials said Thursday.

"A lot" of the prisoners, murderers, robbers and other hard-core offenders among them are believed to have made their way into the city itself, a Justice Ministry official said.

The breakout came from Saturday to Monday, the official said, as violent street protests targeting the French in this former French colony overran Abidjan, killing at least 17 people and wounding more than 900.

Military police guarding the outside of the prison were diverted to deal with the street violence. Prisoners wrested off a manhole cover and made their way out. The mayhem outside the prison followed chaos within prison walls.

Prisoners rioted last week after at least five days without water at the prison. The uprising killed at least seven people, and left several buildings of the prison in the inmates' hands, officials said.

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IN THE STATES

Reduced threat level calms financial nerves

Alert level drops to yellow for buildings in New York, New Jersey, Washington, D.C.

BY TOM HAYS

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Assured that improved security has diminished the possibility of an attack, local officials and workers at five eastern U.S. financial institutions expressed relief — tempered with caution — after federal authorities lowered the terror threat alert status there from orange to yellow.

"I just hope they're right," Rafael Camargo, an employee at the Citicorp Center building in Manhattan, said Wednesday after the announcement in Washington.

Robert E. Selsam, senior vice president of Boston Properties, manager of Citicorp's 59-story tower, called the decision

"welcome news," but added that security measures would not be loosened.

"We're going to continue to maintain the highest standards of security for all our buildings," he said.

Federal officials said better security precautions had reduced the threat at Citicorp building, the New York Stock Exchange in New York, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank buildings in Washington and Prudential Financial Inc.'s headquarters in Newark, N.J.

The lowering to yellow, the midpoint on the government's five-level terror warning system, comes three months after the alert was raised because of concerns the institutions and the areas around them could be al-Qaida targets. Yellow is "elevated,"

while orange is considered a "high" threat of attack.

Authorities had raised the alert on Aug. 1 in response to intelligence indicating al-Qaida had conducted surveillance of the buildings. However, counterterrorism officials later acknowledged that much of the intelligence was at least several years old. They defended their decision to raise the alert because of al-Qaida's record of extensive planning and plotting.

During the weeks leading up to the election, the Bush administration repeatedly warned that al-Qaida could mount an attack aimed at disrupting the democratic process. They cited March train bombings in Madrid linked to al-Qaida just prior to Spain's elections. Spanish voters elected new leadership.

The Homeland Security Department faced criticism throughout the year that terror warnings were designed to boost support for the Bush administration during an election year. Homeland Security Deputy Secretary James Loy said politics didn't play a role in any decisions to raise or lower the threat level.

In a conference call with reporters, Loy said the decision to lower the alert was made because government officials and the owners and operators of affected buildings worked for the past three months to boost security and preparedness. That included drills to test cyber-security backup systems and efforts to secure parking or other features of the buildings that the al-Qaida surveillance had noted.



President Bush participates in a Veterans Day wreath laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery on Thursday in Arlington, Va.

Bush honors veterans at Tomb of Unknowns

BY JENNIFER LOVEN

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush paused on Veterans Day on Thursday to honor American soldiers who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan during his presidency and in wars past.

As he spoke, U.S. warplanes and artillery pounded insurgents west of Baghdad.

"Some of tomorrow's veterans are in combat now in Iraq," Bush said at Arlington National Cemetery, where he laid a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknowns. "They have a clear mission to defeat the terrorists and aid the rise of a new government that can defend itself. They are making us proud... They are winning."

There are about 142,000 U.S. troops in Iraq, up several thousand from a few weeks ago. As the Iraq war nears the two-year mark, the U.S. death toll stands at more than 1,140.

Bush also honored the 25 million living U.S. veterans. "Our nation thanks them all," he said in a somber address.

He said that because Americans are willing to serve in uniform and sometimes sacrifice their lives, America is the "greatest force for good" among all nations of the world.

Veterans' Day, 2004

Holiday filled with ceremony and a little controversy

Smithsonian explores Americans at war

BY FRANK DAVIES

Knight Ridder Newspapers

WASHINGTON — The iconic artifacts of war are all there, as you would expect at the Smithsonian Institution: George Washington's sword, the furniture Grant and Lee used at Appomattox, Va., Colin Powell's battle-dress uniform worn during the Persian Gulf War.

But an ambitious exhibit that tells the story of America at war, opening on Veterans Day, goes beyond the "great man" way of remembering history to honor what's important on Veterans Day: the lives and sacrifices of average soldiers who fought and died from Yorktown, Va., to the streets of Fallujah, Iraq.

First-person narratives on video describe how a Southern spy operated in Washington during the Civil



U.S. Army World War II veteran Lester I. Tenney of Phoenix, Ariz., who was a POW for three and a half years in the Philippines and Japan, tours the Smithsonian Exhibition "The Price of Freedom: Americans at War" after a dedication ceremony on Wednesday in Washington.

War, how a Marine survived the horrors of combat in the Pacific and the night a badly wounded medic treated the men around him during an ambush in Vietnam.

Next to the familiar photos of leaders during Vietnam are the combat boots, dog-eared letters, peace buttons and six packs of Bud-

weiser left at Washington's Vietnam Memorial.

The Smithsonian's fresh look at Americans at war also does not avoid controversy, or the reality that some conflicts — the 1846-48 Mexican War, the 1898 Spanish-American War and Vietnam — deeply divided the country.

TV stations cancel 'Saving Private Ryan' for fear of FCC

BY LEON DROUIN KEITH

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — More than 20 ABC affiliates around the country have announced that they won't take part in the network's Veterans Day airing of "Saving Private Ryan," saying the acclaimed film's violence and language could draw sanctions from the Federal Communications Commission.

The decisions mark a twist in the conflict over the aggressive stand the FCC has taken against obscenity

and profanity since Janet Jackson flashed the world during the last Super Bowl halftime show.

Steven Spielberg's Oscar-winning movie aired on ABC with relatively little controversy in 2001 and 2002, but station owners — including several in large markets — are unnerved that airing it Thursday could bring federal punishment. The film includes a violent depiction of the D-Day invasion and profanity.

"It would clearly have been our preference to run the movie. We

think it's a patriotic, artistic tribute to our fighting forces," Ray Cole, president of Citadel Communications, told AP Radio. The company owns three ABC affiliates in the Midwest.

An FCC spokeswoman said Wednesday that the agency does not monitor television broadcasts, but responds to complaints.

The agency received a complaint after the 2001 broadcast of "Saving Private Ryan," but it was denied, she said.

New findings tarnishing arthritis drugs

BY DIEDTRA HENDERSON

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — One by one, arthritis drugs that promised to ease pain without causing ulcers are losing their luster.

In September, Merck & Co. yanked Vioxx from the market when a trial showed that long-term use of the painkiller nearly doubled the risk of heart attack and stroke.

This week, researchers said a preliminary study indicated that Bextra — another painkiller in the same class — also more than doubled the risk of heart attacks and strokes among patients with heart disease.

Pfizer, which manufactures Bextra, said researchers made "unsubstantiated conclusions" during their presentation at the annual meeting of the American Heart Association in New Orleans.

The company also said the research was "based on information that has not been published in a medical journal or subject to independent scientific review."

The news sent a ripple through the meeting and caused the company's stock to tumble.

Pfizer already has told regulators it will add to its packaging a black box warning, the most strident alert, to warn consumers of a potentially fatal skin reaction linked to Bextra.

Scientists renewed a call for more studies of the painkillers in patients with heart disease, the group likely to suffer the most harm from

this class of drugs known as cox-2 inhibitors. For clinicians at Kaiser Permanente, which serves 8.3 million patients, the Bextra study already has prompted discussion of safer alternatives. And some pressured the Food and Drug Administration to halt advertising directed at consumers.

"Arthritis drugs are not saving people's lives. Ironically, they're inducing heart

tacks and may be losing people's lives," said Dr. Eric J. Topol, a Cleveland Clinic cardiologist who was among the first to warn about heart woes associated with the new painkillers.

The FDA controls drug marketing directed at consumers, Topol said. "The reality is they could shut that down at any time."

Kathleen Quinn, an FDA spokeswoman, could not say what actions the agency would take.

The FDA doesn't discuss negotiations or talks with companies, she said. "We will be taking a look at the whole class of drugs."

Quinn said the FDA has not accelerated the timing of an upcoming meeting on cox-2 inhibitors, currently planned for mid-February.

What's a bone-weary consumer to do between now and then? Experts give contrasting advice.

The cox-2 drugs were praised for blocking the enzyme that causes the pain and swelling of arthritis inflammation. The drugs, however, were selected as their targets, bypassing the cox-1 enzyme that helps the stomach maintain a protective lining.

John Talley, the chemist who invented the Celebrex and Bextra molecules, said the cox-2 drugs helped people who couldn't tolerate the older generation of painkillers. "I do think these drugs have been a tremendous benefit to folks. And they've been extensively studied," Talley said.

Consumers and doctors agreed, to the tune of 40 million cox-2 inhibitor prescriptions written in the first nine months of 2004, according to IMS Health, a company that tracks drug industry trends.

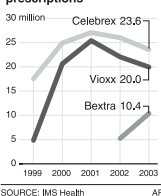
Whether there is a classwide problem with cox-2 inhibitors, to many, remains debatable. "I would hate for people to go off these medications on what may turn out to be unfounded rumors," said Dr. Elizabeth A. Tindall, incoming president of the American College of Rheumatology. "Each drug has to be carefully scrutinized. I don't think they've quite done it with Bextra to the extent they did with Vioxx."

Clinicians who are the decision-makers at Kaiser Permanente, however, are alarmed by the Bextra findings and agree that there are safer alternatives.

Arthritis drugs may pose heart risk

Cox-2 inhibitors, painkillers claiming to be gentler on the stomach than older pain relievers, may lead to other health risks. Vioxx was taken off the market in September after a study showed it increased the risk for heart attacks and strokes. Bextra may pose similar risks.

Cox-2 inhibitor drug prescriptions



90-year-old 'Cradle of Naval Aviation' to get facelift

BY BILL KACZOR

The Associated Press

PENSACOLA, Fla. — The Pensacola Naval Air Station, some of its most historic buildings battered by Hurricane Ivan, has received a vote of confidence from Navy officials who say "The Cradle of Naval Aviation" will celebrate its 90th anniversary as planned and be rebuilt "bigger and stronger and better than ever."

Some of the air station's damaged buildings may be demolished because of Ivan's wrath, but Navy Secretary Gordon R. England has said storm damage would not be a factor in the 2005 base realignment process. He also said that the station is committed to spending about \$600 million to repair and improve the base.

"We feel very confident that the base is going to be rebuilt," said retired Navy Capt. Vann Goodloe, military consultant to the Pensacola Bay Area Chamber of Commerce. "It's going to be bigger and stronger and better than ever."

The air station is the hub of a four-base Pensacola-area Navy complex, which has 16,000 military and 7,400 civilian personnel and serves as headquarters for all Navy training and education.

It also is home to the Navy's Officer Candidate School, Naval Aerospace Research Laboratory,



U.S. NAVY/AP

The Pensacola Naval air station tent hangers, put up in 1914 when the Florida station was first established, are shown in an undated photo. The Cradle of Naval Aviation took a big hit from Hurricane Ivan in September, but nearly two months later the Navy's first air station is ready to celebrate its 90th anniversary.

Blue Angels precision flying team and the National Museum of Naval Aviation.

The bright blue F/A-18 Hornet jets used by the Blue Angels are vastly different from the seven wood, fabric and wire flying boats and float planes that were unloaded on Jan. 10, 1914, at the former Pensacola Navy Yard.

Led by Lt. John Toward, nine officers and 23 enlisted men pitched tents to serve as hangars and built wooden runways to launch the planes into Pensacola Bay.

"Almost every flight was a test flight," said museum historian Bill Goodspeed. "While they were trying to learn to fly they were also evaluating or testing the limits of the aircraft they had. It was very dangerous work."

Lt. Jg. James Murray was the first fatality. He drowned when

his D-1 flying boat crashed into Pensacola Bay only a month after the aviators had arrived in Pensacola.

Within three months, some Pensacola aviators were flying combat missions, the first by U.S. airmen. Three pilots, three planes and 12 maintenance personnel were dispatched to Mexico to conduct observation flights when the United States intervened in a revolution there.

Back in Pensacola, the aviators maintained their headquarters aboard a ship until Nov. 16, 1914, when they moved ashore and the base officially became the Pensacola Naval Aeronautic Station.

The air station grew during World War I, then declined and expanded again during the years just before and during World War II. Training reached a peak of more than 6,000 aviators in 1942.

Gays meet in St. Louis, discuss election results

BY CHERYL WITTENAUER

The Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Organizers of the United States' first national gay and lesbian conference since last week's presidential election say resounding voter passage of gay marriage bans in 11 states has been hard to bear, leaving members devastated and fearful.

Matt Foreman of New York, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, likened the blow to a death, with soul searching in order.

"Our movement needs to regroup and buckle down," said Hyde of Cambridge, Mass., director of the "Creating Change" conference that runs Thursday through Sunday.

Last week's presidential election in 11 new states poses constitutional amendments banning gay marriage. Missouri and five other states already had passed similar measures.

"It's tough when that vast majority of citizens in your state not only do not understand you but take hostile steps to change the constitution to take away rights we never even had," Foreman said. "There's no way you can put lipstick on that pig."

Still, organizers are taking the long view, knowing that gay people have moved beyond past discriminatory practices. They were purged from the U.S. military after World War II, blacklisted as subversives by Sen. Joseph McCarthy in the 1950s and subjected to police raids of their gathering places before fighting back in New York City during what is now known as the Stonewall Riot of June 27, 1969.

On Nov. 2, 40 gay candidates

were elected to local, state and federal offices, according to the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund, the nation's largest gay and lesbian political action committee.

Foreman said the rights movement cannot retreat from working for social and legal rights, though the battle is "extremely uphill."

He and other organizers at this week's conference said they may not be able to change political leaders, and they see no point in talking to what they call "Anti-Gay Inc." — to them, a right-wing, anti-gay leadership whose mission is "to demonize us."

"We have to engage our neighbors and co-workers in a deep conversation about our humanity, and the need to be able to take care of our families," Hyde said.

About 2,000 people are expected to attend the conference, which will be organized by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, the oldest national group advocating for the rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. Hyde said organizers believe the state measures passed by voters will be interpreted very broadly to prohibit recognition of gay and lesbian relationships and families, and conference organizers anticipate the Bush administration will push for a U.S. constitutional amendment to ban marriage.

Organizers say they are deeply troubled that the lives and families of gay people were portrayed as a threat to society in the state campaigns for a gay marriage ban. Hyde fears that passage of the measures now means it's possible for openly gay people in some communities to be physically hurt by those who fear or hate them.

OPINION

Excessive gloating is certainly off message

BY KATHLEEN PARKER

Orlando (Fla.) Sentinel

As President Bush gallops into a second term astride his favorite steed, "Mandate," it's hard to suppress the urge to roar: "Whoa, Hoss!"

Confidence is good; conviction is fine; cocksure is even tolerable for a day or two. But hubris, as most second-term presidents and a host of fallen kings will attest, is nearly always fatal. It offends the gods.

Bush's first foray into the winner's circle following the Nov. 2 election was something shy of humble and had even supporters squirming. At a press conference, he responded to questions about what he intends to do by saying he was going to spend his political capital.

"I earned capital in the campaign," he said, "and now I intend to spend it."

Well all right then. As questioning continued, Bush was prickly with a couple of reporters who asked several questions within one, as they typically do. In the first instance, the question(s) went like this: "Mr. President, thank you. As you look to your second term, how much is the war in Iraq going to cost? Do you intend to send more troops or bring troops home? And in the Middle East more broadly, do you agree with Tony Blair that revitalizing the Middle East peace process is the single most pressing political issue facing the world?"

That's a make-or-buy question. Don't we all want to know the answers to those questions? Bush answered: "Now that I've got the will of the people at my back, I'm going to start enforcing the one-question rule. That

was three questions."

Again, Whoa, Hoss. Bush's bristling probably was reflective of nearly four years of repressed anger toward an often-hostile press. But the man who owns the most nukes, and in whose name young Americans are dying, can afford to be charitable. Especially to people whose unappreciated job it is to hang on his every syllable, including the extra ones.

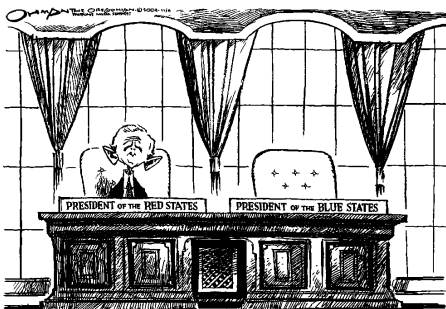
Responding to another three-part question during the same press conference, this time about bringing people together, vis-à-vis a consensus candidate for the Supreme Court or a Democrat on the Cabinet, Bush responded: "Again, you violated the one-question rule right off the bat. Obviously you didn't listen to the will of the people."

Republicans have a right to celebrate their hard-won victory. And if George W. can leap for joy clicking his heels, he should. In private. Remove the spurs first.

In public, however, it would serve Bush well to remember that though 51 percent of voters may have issued a mandate, 48 percent or so begged to differ. And among those who cast their ballots in the red zone — as in "Red" Bush states and regions — were a good many who voted without enthusiasm.

I'm not suggesting that Bush should go out of his way to make nice. Most of those who voted for Bush probably would applaud him if he sent the networks — among the lead dogs at press conferences who sit up front and always are called upon — to the back wall, never to be heard from again.

Even Bush history may be the current crop of reporters, four or five of whom insisted that he admit to mistakes during one recent press conference, it's easy to understand his urge to hurl a brushback pitch



their way — high and inside.

Nevertheless, Bush has an opportunity to be recorded as a great president, a historic figure, if he doesn't squander what remains of American good will. Don't laugh. If he succeeds in Iraq and Afghanistan, if a Palestinian state evolves and Middle East peace gets a toehold, if Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida are extinguished, if no more terrorist attacks occur on U.S. soil, if he makes strides toward balancing the budget, growing the economy, saving Social Security and improving education — and, oh, by the way, rescu-

ing the continent of Africa from the AIDS pandemic — he'll go down as one of history's most brilliant, if accidental, presidents.

Obviously, those are formidable "ifs." But Bush would be easier to root for if he'd jump down off that high horse. People can forgive honest mistakes — failed presidential policies are not rare — but few find it easy to forgive a bad winner.

Without a crystal ball, we may not be able to predict the outcome of the next four years, but we know this much about human nature: Pride usually goeth before a fall. We can afford neither.

Democrats dug in their heels, but voters didn't dig in

BY JAMES K. GLASSMAN

Scraps Howard

Last year, Georgia Sen. Zell Miller wrote a book called "A National Party No More," warning fellow Democrats that they had lost touch with America — and unless they returned to their pro-growth, strong-defense, values-oriented roots — they were doomed to permanent minority status.

The Democrats didn't listen. Instead, they elected Miller, who became the keynote speaker at September's GOP convention.

Miller turned out to be right. George W. Bush won a stunning victory, and Republicans tightened their grip on the House and increased their majorities in the Senate. Incredibly, many Democrats still don't understand what happened. They blame their defeat — which they incorrectly see as narrow — on John Kerry's ineptitude as a candidate or the GOP's get-out-the-vote drive.

As someone who generally likes Republican policies, I'm faced with a dilemma. Should I give the Democrats serious advice — as Miller did — on how to get back into the political ballgame? Or should I rejoice at their denial and keep my mouth shut? I have searched my conscience and made my choice. So, here are 10 recommendations (with fingers, well, somewhat crossed) on how to save the Democratic Party:

1. Nondiscriminatory Republicanism for president in 2008. A Northeastern senator will be a big advantage this time around as Americans tire of Southern hicks. Sure, her negatives are already 44 percent, but Hillary will ... get the support of The New York Times — the key to the White House.

2. Be honest about the so-called terrorist "threat." As Democratic leaders know, it doesn't exist. If it did, then why hasn't there

been another attack on American soil in more than three years? The platform should advocate disbanding the Homeland Security Department and banishing those screeners who make us get to the airport so early.

3. Fund a new Michael Moore documentary blowing the lid off religion in America. Moore's "Fahrenheit 9/11," hailed by Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle (whoops, soon-to-be former leader), nearly won the election for Kerry. The new movie will mock those kooky "born-again," rendering them too embarrassed to show up at the polls.

4. Involve Hollywood more. Kerry failed to make enough use of high-10 stars such as Susan Sarandon, Tim Robbins and Ben Affleck. Shoohei Goldberg's brilliant speech at Kerry's Madison Square Garden fund-raiser galvanized America, but she dropped from sight. Use the woman!

5. Two words: "Gun Control." Why didn't

Kerry emphasize gun control more instead of killing geese? Americans hate guns and understand that criminals do not shoot people, guns do. Ms. Clinton should push for ... a repeal of the Second Amendment, that antiquated guarantor of the so-called "right" to bear arms.

6. Reinstate the draft. America's military has become far too professionalized. Democrats understand that the best way to fight a modern war is with citizen-soldiers. Also, do not hesitate to criticize our troops, who have botched the job in Iraq.

7. Bring foreigners into the Cabinet. The best way to improve relations with our European allies is to ask them to join the next Democratic administration. Jacques Chirac, for example, may soon retire as president of France. Why not ask him to become our next secretary of state? There's nothing in the Constitution that says he can't.

8. Make George Soros chairman of the Democratic Party. Sure, it will be difficult to replace a genius like Terry McAuliffe. But Soros is a billionaire with a common touch, a rare ability to connect with Middle America (probably because he's from Mitteleuropa). He cleverly compared Republicans to Nazis and judiciously spent \$24 million of his own money in efforts that came oh-so-close to beating Bush.

9. "Vote or Die." Use P. Diddy's catchy slogan, which turned out hundreds of millions of young first-time voters in 2004, as the main theme of the 2008 campaign.

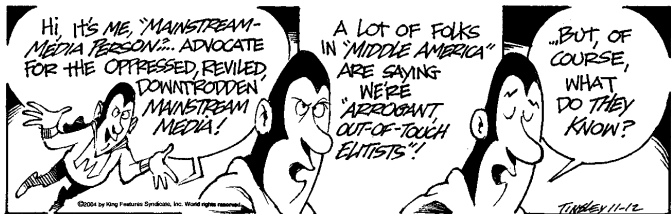
10. Raise taxes across the board. Of course, fleece the rich. That's normal Democratic policy. But lower-income Americans will feel a stronger sense of community if they, too, contribute more to government. ...

Those are only 10 suggestions. I have more for Chairman Soros. He needs only ask.

James K. Glassman is a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and host of TheCenterStation.com.

Mallard Fillmore

BY BRUCE TINSLEY



Latest conspiracy: Kerry won election

By MANUEL ROIG-FRANZIA AND DAN KEATING

The Washington Post

MIAMI — The e-mail subject lines couldn't be any bigger and bolder: "Another Stolen Election," "Presidential election was hacked," "Ohio Fraud."

Even as Sen. John Kerry's campaign is steadfastly refusing to challenge the results of the presidential election, the bloggers and the mortally wounded party loyalists and the spreadsheet-wielding conspiracy theorists are filling the Internet with head-turning allegations. There is the one about how ballots cast than registered voters in the big Ohio county anchored by Cleveland. There are claims that a suspicious number of Florida counties ended up with Bush vote totals that were far larger than the number of registered Republican voters. And then there is the one that might

Bloggers, party loyalists fill Internet with head-turning accusations

be the most popular of all: the exit polls that showed Kerry winning big weren't wrong — they were right.

Each of the claims is buoyed by enough statistics and analysis to sound plausible. In some instances, the theories are coming from respected sources — college engineering professors fascinated by voting technology, Internet journalists, election reform activists.

Ultimately, none of the most popular theories holds up to close scrutiny. And the people who most stand to benefit from the conspiracy theories — the Kerry campaign and the Democratic National Committee — are not biting.

The Ohio vote-fraud theory appears to stem from the curious ways of the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections. During

even-numbered years the county's canvassing board posts vote totals that include the results from outside the county from congressional districts that spill over Cuyahoga's borders. The quirk made it look as if the county had 90,000 more votes than voters.

There also have been reports of more votes counted than voters in some counties in Florida and North Carolina. Steve Ansolabehere of the Caltech-MIT Voting Technology Project said the preliminary results do not add up. "We'll see if there's anything dramatic or widespread once we see the full certifications come in," he said.

The Florida case is more nuanced than the Ohio voting battle.

Numerous bloggers have noted that President Bush's vote totals in 47 Florida counties were larger — in some cases much

larger — than the number of registered Republican voters in the same counties. A widely distributed piece on Consortium news.com said the results "are so statistically stunning that they border on the unbelievable."

The article's main numbers are correct. But the central premises — that there is something suspicious about Bush getting more votes than the number of registered Republicans in rural counties, which use paper ballots — may not be suspicious at all.

"Florida has always been the land of the Dixiecrats," said Walter R. Mebane Jr., a professor of government at Cornell University who specializes in voting issues. "In Florida, as you go north, you go south."

Keating reported from Washington. Staff writers Paul Farih and Susan Schmidt in Washington contributed to this report.

GOP pulls ahead in Wash. race

By DAVID AMMONS

The Associated Press

OLYMPIA, Wash. — Republican Dino Rossi has pulled ahead of Democrat Christine Gregoire in the Washington governor's race, and he boldly announced a transition team to prepare for his possible ascent to power.

The contest ended in a virtual dead heat on Election Day and has remained tight ever since as officials tally hundreds of thousands of mail ballots. Most Washington state residents cast ballots through the mail.

Rossi first pulled ahead of Gregoire on Tuesday; he was leading by about 3,500 votes Wednesday.

Thousands of ballots still have to be counted, and both sides have said the race probably will go on until the final rush of provisional ballots are tallied next Wednesday. A recount is automatic if the gap is less than 2,000 votes.

Rossi, a 45-year-old former state senator and real estate investor, was the first to publicly talk about putting together a transition team. But he insisted that he is just getting ready, not presuming victory or sending any aggressive signals.

"It's prudent, that's all," he said in an interview. "One thing you can't get back is time. We've already lost a week and it could be Thanksgiving or longer until we know for sure, and they won't be moving the inauguration date."

Gregoire, a three-term attorney general, also has a transition effort under way, but said it is premature to talk about it before all the votes are counted. State Democratic Chairman Paul Berend called Rossi's transition announcement Tuesday presumptuous and inappropriate.

"Chris Gregoire is going to be Washington's next governor. Dino can work on his transition plans, as Chris has, but there's no need to hold a press conference and talk about it. It's nothing but game-playing."



Overall view of President Bush's inaugural on Capitol Hill on Jan. 20, 2001. When President Bush takes his second oath of office Jan. 20, there will be an elaborate ceremony set amid the icons of democracy only this city can provide: the Capitol, the White House, Pennsylvania Avenue.

Pomp and pageantry planned for president's inauguration

By EILEEN PUTMAN

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — When President Bush takes his second oath of office Jan. 20, it will be his family's fifth inauguration ceremony, a day of pomp and pageantry set amid the icons of democracy only this city can provide: the U.S. Capitol, the White House, Pennsylvania Avenue.

Security will be extraordinary — it's the first presidential inauguration since the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, and the nation is under a continuing threat by Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida organization.

But that is not expected to alter the elaborate rituals by which the nation installs its president. For Bush's second inauguration, these rituals provide a regal subplot, the crown jewel in the Bush political dynasty: His father, George H. W. Bush, was inaugurated twice as vice president, in 1981 and 1985, and once as president, in 1989.

With 21-gun salutes, fancy-dress balls and tighter-than-ever security, the day will resemble nothing so much as a coronation.

"We don't have the unifying effect of a king or queen. As a result, over the centuries America has developed traditions that encourage stability and public confidence. That's what an inauguration is," said Larry Sabato, director of the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia.

Among those traditions are: a preinaugural church service for the incoming president and first

lady, a congressional escort to the Capitol for the public swearing-in, a presidential inaugural address that sets forth a vision for the new term, a luncheon in the Capitol's famed Statuary Hall and a 1.7-mile procession along Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House before a massive, cheering crowd.

With U.S. soldiers fighting in Iraq, the inauguration is expected to be filled with patriotic symbols — a Capitol festooned in red, white and blue; prayers for those overseas; military salutes underscoring the fact that the president is the commander-in-chief.

"This is where we all come together to show our support for our country and our form of government," said Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss., who chairs the congressional committee that is coordinating the inaugural plans with White House Chief of Staff Andy Card.

The Bushes, said Steve Hess, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, will "have to be very cautious to make sure nothing is perceived as in bad taste because there are Americans in harm's way. It will be a celebration of bringing democracy and freedom to other people."

The Homeland Security Department has designated the inauguration a national security special event, which makes the day's high-profile gathering eligible for federal money and heightened security overseen by the Secret Service.

There will be more security for this inauguration than ever before," said Donald A. Ritchie, associate Senate historian.

Ohio still counting ballots

By CONNIE MABIN

The Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Thanks to John F. Kerry's concession speech, Ohio's election workers don't exactly have the eyes of the nation on them, but their job of checking and counting the state's provisional ballots is as difficult and time-consuming as ever.

Officials in the state's 88 counties must check 155,337 provisional ballots to ensure they are valid, then count them in a process that is expected to take another week or more.

With President Bush leading the Democratic presidential nominee Kerry by more than 136,000 votes in the pivotal state in unofficial returns, it would be practically impossible for provisional ballots to change the outcome.

That means Ohio elections workers aren't under the microscope the way Florida's were after the contested 2000 presidential election.

Still, voters want to know if their vote counted. If not, they want to know why, and we're giving them that this election," said Debbie Ford, a Franklin County voter services supervisor.

Judging from past elections, most provisional ballots will be valid, and the total will more or less reflect the overall vote.

Elections employees are using the names on envelopes containing the provisional ballots to determine whether people meet registration requirements, and whether they voted in the correct precinct.

Valid ballots are eventually added to each county's vote count report, which must be approved by Democrat and Republican board members. Any disputed provisional ballots will be voted on by the members. Republican Secretary of State J. Kenneth Blackwell will break any ties.

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The ties that bind

AR LITTLE ROCK — Gov. Mike Huckabee and his wife plan to convert their nuptial vows into a covenant marriage during a mass ceremony on Valentine's Day, giving a public push to the movement that seeks to strengthen marital ties and make it harder to get divorced.

The governor, a former Baptist minister, said Monday he hopes more than 1,000 other couples will join him for the conversion ceremony at a North Little Rock arena. Arkansas has one of the highest divorce rates in the country.

Covenant marriages, which also are an option in Louisiana and Arizona, usually require pre-wedding counseling and allow divorce only in cases of adultery, imprisonment, abandonment, abuse and after a substantial waiting period.

Influential pastor retires

CA LOS ANGELES — The Rev. Cecil "Chip" Murray, pastor for 27 years at one of the nation's most influential black churches, retired Sunday, delivering a final sermon before a stamping crowd of more than 1,000 worshippers.

Murray, 75, joined the First African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1977 and built the congregation from several hundred members to 17,000.

The Florida native's reputation for colorful language was on display as he preached on the theme of perseverance.

"When God has blessed you by waking you up this morning, how can you have a pity party?" Murray asked parishioners. "Remember, it's all right to sit on the pity pot — just remember to flush when you get through."

A cold year for Santa?

CO DENVER — Apparently there is no special clause for Santa — at least not for flu vaccines.

Nick Pallotto, 62, who plays Santa Claus in malls, turned up at a flu clinic in Colorado Springs and was denied a shot because he wasn't 65 or suffering from a chronic health problem.

"They asked me if I was 65, and I said, 'No, but I am Santa,'" he said Saturday.

For the past four years Pallotto has worked for Naturally Santa Inc., appearing as Santa Claus at malls in New Jersey, Denver and will work this year in Virginia.

Pallotto said he gets a flu shot every year because he has so many contacts with children. More than 10,000 kids were on his lap last year.

Marriage ban challenged

GA ATLANTA — Gay-rights supporters sued over Georgia's newly approved constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage, saying Tuesday the wording did not make it clear that voters were also being asked to ban civil unions.

The plaintiffs — including two Democratic state legislators and a University of Georgia law professor — argued the amendment, which overrode a veto on Nov. 2, should be thrown out.

On Monday, Republican members of the state House vowed to



fight the expected lawsuit.

The plaintiffs had previously tried to block the vote on the same grounds — that it was misleading — but the state Supreme Court decided it could not intervene until a vote had been taken.

Cell door kills inmate

UT DRAPER — An inmate was killed accidentally when his head was crushed in a closing cell door, officials said Monday.

John J. Gardner, 27, was peering out his cell at Utah State Prison on Thursday when an officer about 150 feet away activated the mechanism that closed the cell doors on the block, the sheriff's department said.

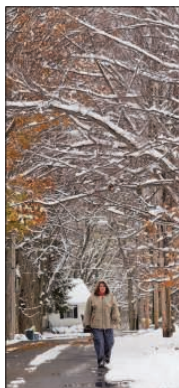
The officer was standing behind a wall, where the door mechanism is located, and could not see that Gardner was not completely inside the cell, prison spokesman Jack Ford said.

Ford said he knew of no previous cases of an inmate getting his head caught in the door, though "we've had arms caught before."

Alarming ticket plan

ME PORTLAND — The City Council is considering an ordinance that would give police authority to ticket or tow vehicles whose alarms won't turn off.

The proposal before the com-



Winter wonderland

Sue Lamb of Parish, N.Y., walks down Spring Street in Mexico, N.Y., after a morning snowfall.

cil's public safety committee is to ticket cars when an alarm sounds for more than 10 minutes in an hour. The first offense would cost \$50, escalating to a fourth offense fine of \$300. The fines would be in addition to towing fees if the alarm fails to shut off.

"These things left unattended can just blow out into the night," said Councilor Peter O'Donnell. "I'm not in search of laws, but if there's something that should be regulated in terms of the nuisance they can cause other people, that's something we should work on."

Pricey pecans

NM LAS CRUCES — Pecan growers in New Mexico are poised to reap the benefits of a volatile hurricane season that took its toll on farmers across the Southeast earlier this year.

With about 25,000 acres of trees, Dona Ana County alone typically produces about 80 percent of the state's pecan crop.

Farmer and pecan buyer Phillip Arnold said the quality of this year's crop will be excellent, in part because of rain in the area for August.

Fewer pecans produced in the Southeast after hurricanes Ivan and Frances meant a boost in the market price nationwide, said Dona Ana County extension agent John M. White.

"Unfortunately, it's one of those situations where somebody benefits when somebody loses," White said. "We're going to reap the benefits."

Snow no good for crops

SD YANKTON — With forecasters predicting snow this week in parts of the state, some South Dakota farmers have kicked their corn harvest into high gear.

"Snow is a worry," said Craig Anthony, a farmer and Yankton County Extension educator. "There have been times when farmers had to finish harvest in the spring. Then, they lose some yield from snow knocking down the corn and wildlife eating on it all winter."

The 2004 corn harvest has been well behind schedule, mostly because of a cool, damp summer that hampered maturity. Some corn has been harvested for livestock feed, but many farmers held off from picking corn to let the grain dry in the fields rather than pay to dry it in a bin.

Prank gone wrong

NH MEREDITH — A man is facing criminal charges in the nearly year-old shooting of a teenager who police said was playing a prank by rapping on the house windows in an attempt to scare those inside.

Eric Buck, 21, Meredith, is facing one count of simple assault, a misdemeanor. Police say he shot a 16-year-old Center Harbor boy in the leg with a .22-caliber handgun on Nov. 28, 2003. Buck has pleaded not guilty and is out on \$10,000 bail.

Police originally declined to file charges against Buck, saying there was no criminal intent. The shooting took place during an incident characterized as a prank gone wrong.



Patriotic welcoming

Uncle Sam bends down to associate with the common people as he slaps hands with some kids along the Veteran's Day Parade route on U.S. 1 in Holly Hill, Fla.

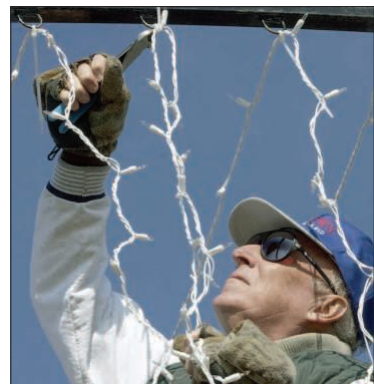


Refreshing bike ride

Megan Koenigsman, right, followed by her sister, Aubrey, react to the refreshing spray of water as they ride their bikes through a maze of sprinklers in Hays, Kan., on the campus of Fort Hays State University.



South for the winter A young bull moose crosses the road near the junction of Highway 59 and the turn-off for Ten Mile Lake in Otter Tail County, Minn. The transient moose was most likely trying to establish a new home range, according to Minnesota DNR Big Game Program Coordinator Lou Cornicelli. "They usually don't get that far south," he said.



Prepping for the holidays Volunteer Larry Biltz cuts a string of lights away from the frame as he prepares to replace the non-working strand with a new one during the setup of the tunnel in the Light-Up Middletown display at Smith Park in Middletown, Ohio. The annual seasonal lighting display will open the day after Thanksgiving and run through New Year's Eve.



Enjoying the weather An unidentified waterskier enjoys unseasonably warm weather in the late afternoon sun on the Missouri River near Great Falls, Mont.

2 shots better than 1

WA SPOKANE — Chris Varallo thought it was quite amazing when he aced the third hole at Liberty Lake Golf Course. Then he went ahead and hit a second hole-in-one on the 11th hole of the same round.

Odd against that are about 67 million to 1, according to Golf Digest.

"The first one was pretty amazing," said Varallo. "But after the second, everyone was in utter disbelief. Other people on the course heard the screaming and were coming over to see what had happened."

"Both of them were good-looking shots," said Dave Knutson, a member of his foursome who works with Varallo. "In fact, they were almost identical — same trajectory with a little fade. And both of them were one hop and plunk!"

"I'm very happy for him, but I'm dreading going back to work because I'm never going to hear the end of it," Knutson said.

Shirt off her back

LA JEFFERSON — When an election worker told Debbie Dupeire that her Bush-Cheney T-shirt was illegal at the polls, Dupeire didn't get mad. She got undressed.

Dupeire ripped off the T-shirt and voted Tuesday in a sports bra, too afraid to lose her place in a long line. Under state law, candidates' names cannot be displayed within 500 feet of a polling place.

"I really thought it was OK to wear my shirt. I didn't go there to cause trouble," said Debbie Dupeire, a 38-year-old makeup artist.

"I'd been in line wearing the shirt for 15 minutes, and no one said anything until I was about to vote," said Dupeire. "Had they told me before I signed the book, I would have gone out and turned my shirt wrong-side out."

Missing woman found

ND BISMARCK — A body found near a farm building in North Dakota was identified as that of a woman who disappeared along with her Alzheimer's-stricken husband nearly three months ago.

Authorities got a break in the search for Yvonne Olson, 69, and her 73-year-old husband Norman when a hunter discovered their car in the farm building, leading police to the body about a mile away.

The husband has not been found. Sheriff Eugene Molbert said the cause of Yvonne Olson's death is still under investigation; authorities have not ruled out foul play.

The couple disappeared in August after leaving behind cash, credit cards and thawing meat on the counter of their home in Hettinger.

Airline fights hunger

TX SAN ANTONIO — A Southwest Airlines jet was crossing Texas on Wednesday distributing 1 million pounds of food products to Texas food banks.

Dubbed "The Flight to Fight Hunger," the delivery celebrates the 100th anniversary of the San Antonio-based H-E-B grocery

chain.

The donations were earmarked for 18 food banks affiliated with America's Second Harvest — The Nation's Food Bank Network.

The contributions will allow the Texas affiliates of America's Second Harvest to provide about 780,000 meals to needy families, said Jan Pruitt, president of the Texas Association of Food Banks and executive director of the North Texas Food Bank.

Deadly home invasion

MI KENTWOOD — A man died after breaking into the home of a woman he had been stalking and setting off an explosive device that injured five officers, police said.

It was uncertain if the man died of injuries sustained in the blast or from shots fired by police. Most of the officers suffered headaches and other minor injuries from the blast.

Police said a standoff began after the woman called police to report that someone had broken into her home.

The woman escaped, but when officers entered, the man detonated an explosive device.

Police Chief Richard Mattice said the woman had filed multiple restraining orders against the man. It was not immediately known how the two knew each other.

Prep school drowning

NH CONCORD — A 15-year-old St. Paul's School student drowned in 4 feet of water in the school's newly opened pool, police said.

Clifford Nyquist of New Boston, a sophomore, was swimming when he sank beneath the water's surface. He was unconscious by the time lifeguards found him and died several hours later at Concord Hospital, police said.

Douglas Dickson, dean of students at St. Paul's, said it does not appear that Nyquist dove into the shallow water and struck his head on the pool floor. There were about a dozen people in the eight-lane, Olympic-sized pool at the time.

Nyquist's parents said their son was a strong swimmer and was in perfect health. They said two adult lifeguards were on duty.

The pool was opened less than a month ago as part of a new \$24 million athletic complex, the parents who want to use it must have permission from the school and from their parents.

Masked robbers

VA GREAT FALLS — Police sought four men who broke into a house, robbing the occupants and leaving them bound in duct tape.

Authorities received a call from a neighbor reporting that one of the victims was outside her house with her hands and ankles bound.

The victims told police they were awakened sometime overnight by the men in hoods and masks. Cash and property were stolen from the home, said Sgt. Richard Perez of the Fairfax County Police, declining to elaborate.

At least one of the men had a gun, but none of the victims was seriously injured, Perez said.

Stories and photos from wire services

FACES

Activist artists buoyed despite Bush win

BY HILLEL ITALIE
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — They urged young people to "Vote for Change" and "Rock the Vote." They gave concerts and readings in "battleground" states. They made moves meant to turn Republicans into Democrats and the president into both a monster and a laughingstock.

Rarely have so many artists committed themselves to the defeat of a politician as Bruce Springsteen, Michael Moore and many others did in opposing George W. Bush. Now, with the president's re-election, those artists find themselves asking whether they made a difference and whether they would do it again.

"To me it was a huge success just for us to get young people into it," says hip-hop mogul Sean "P. Diddy" Combs, who organized an all-star, get-out-the-vote campaign known as "Vote or Die."

Combs' voter drive, Springsteen's "Vote for Change" tour and Moore's anti-Bush documentary, "Fahrenheit 9/11," were the most visible signs of artists' involvement. Countless others joined in less public ways, helping to register voters and get them to the polls. Errol Morris, the Academy Award-winning documentary maker, filmed a series of anti-Bush TV commercials featuring Republicans unhappy with the war in Iraq; he spent Election Day in Wisconsin urging Democrats to vote.

"You do certain things regardless of whether you know it's going to help," Morris said. "It might help, and that's enough of a reason for doing it. By doing nothing, you're definitely not going to help."

Artists may well have made a difference. According to CIRCLE (the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement), a leading research organization, 4.6 million more young people cast their votes in 2004 than in 2000 and the turnout rate for 18-to-29-year-olds was

51.6 percent, compared with 47.9 percent in 1992, considered the previous high point for youth involvement. Exit polls conducted for The Associated Press and television networks by Edison Media Research/Mitofsky International gave Democrat John Kerry a 54-45 advantage among young people, compared to a 48-46 edge for Al Gore over Bush in 2000.

"I think there were probably a lot of reasons for bringing out the youth vote, but all the media buzz and the campaigns like 'Vote for Change' certainly helped create excitement and general enthusiasm," Carrie Donovan, CIRCLE's youth director, said Thursday. "I know my own sister voted for the first time and when I asked her why, she said it was partly because of all the 'Rock the Vote' ads on MTV."

Many artist-activists have posted messages of encouragement on their Web sites. Musician Moby urged Bush opponents not to "sink into depression over the democratically expressed will of the majority of voting Americans." Moore, perhaps the most relentless, resourceful and commercially successful of the anti-Bush artists, has replaced a high-tech voter guide and gleeful messages on his Web site with a grainy photo montage of Bush and a brief statement below: "We're not going away. Join our mailing list."

American authors have a long history of being more detached from politics than their peers in other countries, but many worked against Bush during the fall. Stephen Elliott organized "Operation Ohio," which featured readings and phone calls to first-time voters by Michael Chabon, Jonathan Lethem and many others.

"I don't think there's any downside to getting people involved in the electoral process," says Elliott, whose books include the novel "Happy Baby" and the nonfiction "Looking Forward to It: Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the American Political Process."

"My candidate didn't win — I'm not too



Musician Sean "P. Diddy" Combs makes an appearance on the *Choose or Lose* fall re-run edition of Total Request Live on Election Day at the MTV studios in New York.

excited about that — but 'Operation Ohio' made the world a better place by getting people to vote."

Lethem, author of "Motherless Brooklyn," "The Fortress of Solitude" and other novels, said his election war was a "kind of intervention" against the "radical" politics of Bush and that given another chance he would have done the same.

Meanwhile, Morris said the 2004 election reminded him of making "The Thin Blue Line," his acclaimed documentary

about a wrongfully imprisoned man, Randall Dale Adams.

"I spent several years trying to get that man out of prison. I worried about him and I thought, 'I am going to have kept thinking about this unless it changes.' I wanted it to end," says Morris, whose film did help free Adams.

"I saw the election as a similar situation. One of the reasons I wanted Kerry to win is that I wanted the luxury of not having to think about politics. And now that's not going to happen."

Actor's Africa tour geared to fight AIDS

Brad Pitt spent four days in Ethiopia to learn more about AIDS in Africa as part of a fund-raising campaign to combat the disease on the world's poorest continent.

The trip was organized by DATA, a Washington-based lobby group co-founded by rock star Bono that campaigns on Third World trade, debt and HIV/AIDS. Pitt began his first visit to Ethiopia last Friday and left late Monday night.

While in Ethiopia, Pitt visited local projects fighting the spread of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. The 40-year-old actor also met with eight top Ethiopian singers who have collaborated on songs to educate people about HIV and to raise money for AIDS programs.

Celebrities unite for cancer research

A light rain couldn't dampen spirits as dozens of Hollywood celebrities attended the second annual Louis Vuitton United Cancer Front gala, hosted by Sarah Jessica Parker, Dustin Hoffman and Jamie Foxx.

Underwritten by fashion designer Louis Vuitton, all proceeds from Monday night's event will go to UCF, the brainchild of Lilly Tartikoff, whose husband, TV executive



Serena Williams, Jaime Foxx and Venus Williams

Brandon Tartikoff, died in 1997 of Hodgkin's disease. Tennis star Serena Williams, her sister Venus Williams, singer Jewel, and actresses Kristin Davis, Lauren Graham and Kate Winslow were among those in attendance.

Spanish filmmaker revels in new film

Pedro Almodóvar has been down the red carpet before, but the director said it felt like the first time at the Hollywood premiere of his new film, "Bad Education."

"For me, premieres are like when you fall in love," Almodóvar explained, speaking in Spanish. "It's like the first time in that it's going to last forever. So, in that sense, this premiere is like the first time I've premired the movie, and that's the way I'm celebrating it."

The movie has been shown at film festivals in Moscow, Toronto, New

York and Telluride, Colo.

"Bad Education" teams Gael Garcia Bernal and Fede Martinez in an often gritty examination on the effect of Franco-era religious schooling and sexual abuse on the lives of two longtime friends.

"Bad Education" opens in Los Angeles and New York City on Nov. 19.

Shaver, Clark honored as songwriters

Billy Joe Shaver, Guy Clark, Dennis Morgan and Freddie Hart have been inducted into the Nashville Songwriter Hall of Fame.

Tom T. Hall gave Shaver's induction speech Sunday, and Kris Kristofferson joined Joe Ely to perform some of Shaver's classics, which include "Good Christian Soldier," "Old Five and Dimers Like Me," "Honky Tonk Heroes" and "I'm Just an Old Chunk of Coal."

Shaver was moved to tears by the performance. "Boy, it's been a rough road, but there've been a lot of happy times, too," he said.

Lyle Lovett and Verlon Thompson paid tribute to Clark by playing selections from his catalog, which includes "L.A. Freeway," "Desperados Waiting for a Train" and "Homegrown Tomatoes."

Stories and photos from The Associated Press



Pitt



Almodóvar



Shaver

YOUR MONEY

Bargain hunting online

Discount site allows shoppers to compare prices on Web

By DON OLDENBURG

The Washington Post

With the holidays ahead, some consumers will begin shifting their attention to finding bargains. Andrew Moss is counting on it.

"The focus is the first couple of months will be on shoppers shopping for gifts," says Moss, founder and CEO of Cairo, an online site launched last week that searches out items on sale at the stores nearest you — wherever you are nationwide.

Cairo's concept trades on the growing trend of shoppers researching purchases online before buying from local retailers. A study by the Diener Research Group, a business strategy consultant, reported last month that spending on off-line purchases made by consumers who conducted online research totaled \$180.7 billion a year and is growing faster than online purchases, which totaled \$106.5 billion.

Calling "cross-channel shopping" the "new wave of commerce," Forrester Research, which tracks business and technology markets, reported in September that 65 percent of online consumers were researching products online before buying their off-line. Forty-eight percent said the main reason they wanted to see the product before buying it.

"It's really just about making you a much smarter shopper and saving you a lot of time and money," says Moss.

Moss designed Cairo to give consumers easy online access to the "richness of information out there" so they can save "usually 30 to 40 percent discount from the retail price."

Shoppers key in their ZIP code or city name at Cairo.com, then search for local store sales by specific item, product category, brand, merchant or price range. Click "search" and it collects sales information from the online and local newspaper ads of up to 26 retailers, depending on your location, including Best Buy, Circuit City, Kmart, Target, Kohl's, Kopy, Lowe's, Lowe's, Sears, Staples and Toys R Us. Results can be sorted by relevance, price or distance to store.

Cairo product manager Tamara Pattison says the site is meant to conjure up an image of "a marketplace with lots of products, vendors and price points" where consumers can find anything they need at the price they want.

Shoppers willing to register at Cairo (requiring name, address and e-mail) can use several additional consumer-friendly features. The site provides rebates and price guarantees offered by

stores and manufacturers on items you buy. It e-mails you alerts if a product you want goes on sale or its price drops. It lets you compare sale prices with online retailer prices. And it tracks advertised sale prices on a guaranteed-price item you've bought and alerts you if it sells for less at another store and you're owed a refund.

Cairo isn't the first online bargain engine. There are dozens of product comparison Web sites including Google's Froogle, BizRate and America Online's In-Store, which was launched in September. But they aren't localized to brick-and-mortar sales, and they aren't as fast-focused.

As for local-focused shoppers online, ShopLocal, which opened for business in August, searches sales primarily from the online circulars published by its parent company, Cross as well as newspapers. SalesCircular locates sale-priced items by state only.

Cairo differs because its service isn't tied to its business relationships. Instead, it is mediated after the Google design that separates advertising on the right-hand column from its own content.

"Our search results are not influenced in any way by advertising or pay placement," Moss says. "The search result you see will be absolutely the best for the consumer."

Naming Honda CR-V freaks out new jawnner

Dear Tom and Ray:

I was pretty freaked out recently to learn that more than 20 2003-04 Honda CR-Vs had caught fire after their first oil change. I own a 2003. I called my dealership, and the service manager gave me a story about fly-by-night oil-change places and basically patted me on the head and told me not to worry. This begs the question of owners who change their own oil. I went in for my second oil change and had a chat with the manager. It was a

disap- pointing, because he said he had never heard of this problem! I wasn't happy and told him that I felt scared and that if anything ever happened to myself or my family, I would sue his dealership. Honda he told me that he didn't want a customer like me (gas mileage road test it is comfortable and easy to drive. What do you think I should do? Thanks. — Mel

RAY: Geez, I just assumed that those fires were due to Honda's factory gas-grill option.

TOM: It's a tough one, Mel. Her fire has happened before. The fires have been reported in 2003 and 2004 Honda CR-Vs. And they seem to happen immediately after oil changes.

RAY: The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration — the folks who can order recalls — looked into it last spring. And they found nothing. The problem was sloppy mechanics. Honda says that every CR-V fire had a "double gasket" on the oil filter — which means that the mechanic didn't remove the old oil-filter gasket (the rubber seal) before installing a new one — although NHTSA's own reports also cite cases where improperly installed (pinched or distorted) gaskets led to fires.

TOM: In either case, that allows the filter to drip oil onto the hot exhaust system while the car is running, when the exhaust is at its hottest — and, voilà, flaming Honda!

RAY: So NHTSA closed its investigation. And Honda, for its part, agreed to warn all of its tech-

nicians about this potential problem, and insist that they be extra careful when replacing oil filters on CR-Vs. Problem solved, right?

TOM: Well, unfortunately, even after Honda sent out this clear warning, NHTSA continued to get complaints about flaming Hondas. Why? Well, perhaps some technicians — despite Honda's efforts — didn't get the message.

RAY: Perhaps there are lots of non-Honda technicians at gas stations and independent shops who just haven't

heard about the char-broiled CR-Vs.

TOM: Or perhaps the simple jobs like oil changes are left to kids who are working part time after school and are distracted by the latest plot twist on "The O.C."

RAY: In any case, NHTSA has wisely reopened the investigation. That makes sense to us. The real problem, in our opinion, is most likely either a flaw in the filter design, or that the hot exhaust is just a little too close to the oil filter on this car.

TOM: A true idiot-proof solution (this happens to be my area of expertise) would require shielding the exhaust so that the oil filter can't drip on it.

RAY: But if and until that happens, Mel, you have to be very careful. You have to either discuss this with your mechanic or make sure you oil change to make sure he remembers, or you have to dump the car and get something else.

TOM: If the dealer gave you a fair offer for it, I wouldn't blame you if you dump it. For most people, the prospect of your car going up in flames is not a worry you need to add to your life.

RAY: We'll let you know what comes from NHTSA's reopened investigation. But meanwhile, those with 2003 and 2004 CR-Vs need to be sure that anyone changing the oil is fully aware of this problem, and how to prevent it. And it wouldn't be a bad idea to keep a bag of marshmallows in the cargo area, just in case. That way, you'd be prepared to make the best of a bad situation.

Got a question about cars? Write to Tom and Ray in care of *Wired*, 1000 Pennsylvania Ave., or e-mail them at asktom@wired.com or askray@wired.com. For more information, visit the Car Talk section of *Wired* on the World Wide Web. Content curated by King Features Syndicate Inc.

Click and Clack

Tom and Ray Magliozzi

WEDNESDAY'S MARKET SUMMARY

High	Low	High	Low
10,593.17	10,556.51	Dow Jones Industrial	10,181.49
3,289.51	3,243.46	Dow Jones Transportation	3,574.36
223.14	241.26	Dow Jones Utilities	3,224.44
6,524.44	6,524.45	NYSE Composite	6,881.22
1,313.12	1,057.21	NYSE Midcap	1,333.23
1,259.82	1,259.82	Nasdaq Composite	2,494.56
1,170.87	1,031.20	S&P 500	1,162.91
62.31	54.25	S&P MidCap	621.13
697.75	515.90	Russell 2000	598.61
11,652.35	10,559.28	DJ Wilshire 2000	11,399.04

Most Active (\$1 or more)	Most Active (\$1 or more)
Volume	Volume
Merck	Nasdaq
Alcatel	Microsoft
Laboratory	Oracle
Novartis	United Therapeutics
Genzyme	United Therapeutics
Genzyme	United Therapeutics
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Alcatel	Microsoft
Laboratory	Oracle
Novartis	United Therapeutics
Genzyme	United Therapeutics
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EXCHANGE RATES

Unit	Rate
British pound (Nov. 11)	\$1,321.32
British pound (Nov. 12)	\$1,321.32
South Korean won (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Japanese yen (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Chinese yuan (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Indian rupee (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Thai baht (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Singapore dollar (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Malaysian ringgit (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Philippine peso (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Indonesian rupiah (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Chilean peso (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Colombian peso (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Venezuelan bolivar (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Argentine peso (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Uruguayan peso (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Peruvian sol (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Ecuadorian sucre (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Bolivian boliviano (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Paraguayan guarani (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
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Paraguayan guarani (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Uruguayan peso (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Peruvian sol (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Ecuadorian sucre (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Bolivian boliviano (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Paraguayan guarani (Nov. 11)	1,080.00

Unit	Rate
British pound (Nov. 11)	\$1,321.32
British pound (Nov. 12)	\$1,321.32
South Korean won (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Japanese yen (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Chinese yuan (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Indian rupee (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Thai baht (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Singapore dollar (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Malaysian ringgit (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Philippine peso (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Indonesian rupiah (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Chilean peso (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Colombian peso (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Venezuelan bolivar (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Argentine peso (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Uruguayan peso (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Peruvian sol (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Ecuadorian sucre (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Bolivian boliviano (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Paraguayan guarani (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Uruguayan peso (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Peruvian sol (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Ecuadorian sucre (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Bolivian boliviano (Nov. 11)	1,080.00
Paraguayan guarani (Nov. 11)	1,080.00

cents and Sensibility

Money tip of the day

Car rental deals

The Associated Press

Regular travelers know that rental car pricing can be as confusing as deciphering the federal tax code in 7-point type. But a new study shows that absolute abomination in another.

Yet, with a bit of research effort and patience, this task can be simplified dramatically using your telephone and the Internet, according to TravelSmart, a

newspaper published in Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.

Start at a major volume travel site, which shows a wide range of companies and results at a glance.

Next, head to the individual company site to see what they're offering on price.

Also, if you don't have to get the car at an airport, see what the cost would be elsewhere in town — it's often lower.

PRECIOUS METALS

London close

Gold	\$434.60
Silver	\$37.40

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	4.75
Discount rate	3.00
3-month Treasury market rate	2.12
3-month bill	2.07
3-month note	2.07
3-month T-bill	2.07
3-month T-note	2.07
3-month T-bill	2.07
3-month T-note	2.07
3-month T-bill	2.07
3-month T-note	2.07



EUROPEAN FORECAST

Benelux: Mostly to partly cloudy skies. Highs in the mid 40s to lower 50s. Saturday lows in the 30s.

Britain, Ireland: Mostly cloudy skies. Highs in the mid 40s to lower 50s. Friday lows in the mid 40s.

Croatia and Bosnia: Mostly cloudy skies with rain showers and morning fog. Highs in the upper 40s to mid 50s. Saturday lows in the mid 30s to mid 40s.

France: Partly cloudy skies. Highs in the mid 40s to upper 50s, Saturday lows in the lower 30s to lower 40s, and in the lower 50s along the southern coast.

Northern Germany: Mostly cloudy skies with rain showers late. Highs in the mid to upper 30s to lower 40s, Saturday lows in the 30s.

Southern Germany: Cloudy skies with areas of dense fog. Highs in the mid 30s to low 40s, Saturday lows in the upper 20s to mid 30s.

Hungary: Cloudy skies with rain showers. Highs in the upper 30s, Saturday lows in the upper 40s.

Northern Italy: Cloudy skies with rain showers and isolated thunderstorms. Highs in the upper 40s to lower 50s. Saturday lows in the upper 30s to mid 40s.

Southern Italy: Mostly cloudy skies with rain showers. Highs in the mid 60s to upper 70s, Saturday lows in the 50s.

Kosovo: Mostly cloudy skies with rain showers and fog. Highs in the 50s, Saturday lows in the mid 30s to lower 40s.

Norway: Cloudy skies with rain showers. Highs in the upper 40s to lower 50s, Saturday lows in the upper 20s to mid 30s.

Portugal, Spain: Partly cloudy skies with isolated rain showers. Highs in the mid to upper 50s in the northern portions with highs in the mid 60s to lower 70s along the southern coast, Saturday lows in the upper 30s to lower 50s.

Turkey: Mostly cloudy with rain showers and isolated thunderstorms. Highs in the mid 60s to upper 70s, Friday lows in the mid 50s to lower 60s.

AFRICA

Cape Town	76	62	Mogadishu	88	77
Dakar	89	77	Nairobi	78	61
Freetown	88	76	Rabat	65	49
Harare	89	71	Windhoek	71	54

THE WORLD

Amsterdam	51	40	Moscow	91	81
Bahran	88	70	Montreal	39	33
Beijing	60	48	New York	41	30
Bombay	82	67	Osaka	61	48
Buenos Aires	72	63	Rio de Jan	80	78
Calcutta	89	76	Sao Paulo	80	69
Caracas	88	76	Sydney	72	65
Hanoi	86	73	Tokyo	70	64
Hong Kong	83	73			
Jakarta	80	50			

MIDEAST



For current weather watches, warnings, and 5-day forecasts go to the USAF Operational Weather Squadron home page at: <https://www.smbach.af.mil> or <https://www.public.smbach.af.mil>

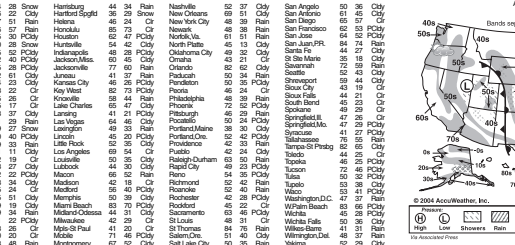
SUN & MOON

Sunrise (Baghdad)	Today 0631	Tomorrow 0532
Sunrise (Frankfurt)	Today 0731	Tomorrow 0732
Sunset (Baghdad)	Today 1603	Tomorrow 1602
Sunset (Frankfurt)	Today 1601	Tomorrow 1602

TODAY'S STATE-SIDE OUTLOOK

Alabama	48	34	Cloudy
Alaska	43	25	Partly Cloudy
Arizona	57	42	Partly Cloudy
Arkansas	57	42	Partly Cloudy
California	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Colorado	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Connecticut	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Delaware	44	33	Partly Cloudy
District of Columbia	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Florida	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Georgia	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Hawaii	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Idaho	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Illinois	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Indiana	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Iowa	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Kansas	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Kentucky	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Louisiana	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Maine	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Maryland	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Massachusetts	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Michigan	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Minnesota	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Mississippi	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Missouri	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Montana	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Nebraska	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Nevada	44	33	Partly Cloudy
New Hampshire	44	33	Partly Cloudy
New Jersey	44	33	Partly Cloudy
New Mexico	44	33	Partly Cloudy
New York	44	33	Partly Cloudy
North Carolina	44	33	Partly Cloudy
North Dakota	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Ohio	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Oklahoma	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Oregon	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Pennsylvania	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Rhode Island	44	33	Partly Cloudy
South Carolina	44	33	Partly Cloudy
South Dakota	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Tennessee	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Texas	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Utah	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Vermont	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Virginia	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Washington	44	33	Partly Cloudy
West Virginia	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Wisconsin	44	33	Partly Cloudy
Wyoming	44	33	Partly Cloudy

THE UNITED STATES OUTLOOK



Scheduled to

ETS or PCS

Check our Relocation Guide every Saturday to find Realtors at your new station.

STARS AND STRIPES Your Hometown Newspaper

Horoscope

The new moon in Scorpio poses a question about that ongoing personal habit you've been struggling with for so long. What if you just accepted that extra tummy roll or your obsession with that certain television show as part of who you are? If the prospect of forever living with the flaws scares you, now's the time to do something about it.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (November 12). This will be a year of firsts — first marriages for some of you and first children or grandchildren for others, particularly between the months of April and August. Some will travel to Europe for the first time. Others buy your first home or achieve something significant in your career, such as selling a first book. Lucky love signs are Cancer and Virgo.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You're making up your own definition for the word "commitment." If you've been seeing someone special for a while, you may be thinking about tying the knot. Watch out for a Sagittarius or Leo who wants to hog the spotlight.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Make a declaration of independence. Relationships that are on shaky ground need someone to make the big decision — why not you? If you happen to work from home, you can expect a nice bonus to hit your mailbox real soon.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Start your new exercise program. You'll have plenty of energy and motivation and no trouble finding a personal trainer or workout partner. Your creative life will especially benefit from being half of a dynamic duo.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Relationships deepen as you get lucky in love now. You'll find new qualities to love and admire, and you can bet your counterpart adores the attention. Single crabs find the fish in the sea they were originally trying to catch.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). A sudden career change could rattle you temporarily, but you'll be back on your feet in no time. Chances

are, your new situation will bring you more money and respect. The spotlight is on you — are you ready for your close-up?

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You get noticed on the job, and people ask for you by name. Positive reviews and excellent word of mouth put your services in demand, especially if you work in the arts. Remodeling or redecorating will be comically inspired.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Your daily routine is constantly changing, which is good since you get bored easily. At work, you're still trying to get into a comfortable groove. Talking to an earthly Taurus, Virgo or Capricorn will help keep you grounded.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). There is no better time to launch a new project than right now. You are an absolute dynamo, and everything you touch turns to gold. Even that hottie who seemed so out of your league just a few days ago is putty in your hands.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Your living arrangements are due for a change, and some long-distance traveling may be involved. Some of you inquire into a foreign exchange program or teach overseas. Your love of learning must be satisfied!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You're reassessing your commitments, as cosmic energy brings with it a renewed sense of purpose. You've accepted new responsibilities and are wondering now if you should have. Don't doubt your ability!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Work gets really hectic as the year-end push starts to take effect. Watch your health. All this rushing around and eating on the run is bound to take a toll on you. You would be wise to check your cholesterol.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Your deep and resounding need to help others and save the world is activated. With the universal gears shifting in your favor, you can combine your two loves and make a profit to boot!

Creators Syndicate

Holiday Mathis



Calvin and Hobbes



Jump Start



Zits



Cathy



Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



Red and Rover



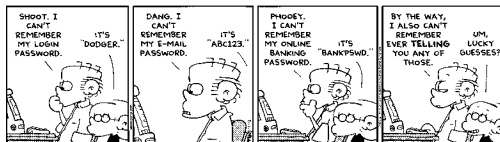
Better or Worse



Peanuts



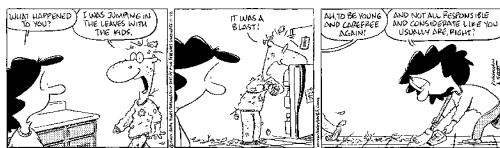
Fotrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



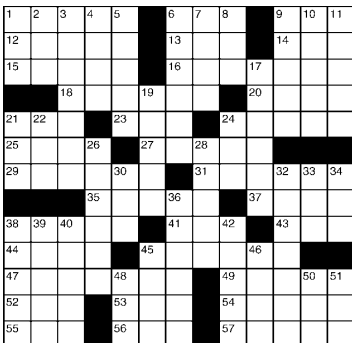
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



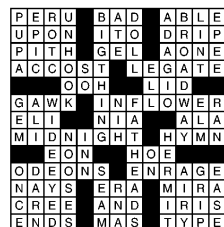
Across

- 1 Cupid's yokemate
- 6 Part of AT&T
- 9 Frequently
- 12 Flooded
- 13 "— not choose to run"
- 14 Opposite of "post-"
- 15 Do something else with
- 16 Two 2 x 4s?
- 18 Withstand
- 20 Rock group?
- 21 Popular dessert
- 23 Grounded Aussie
- 24 Cognizant
- 25 Utah city
- 27 Tubular pasta
- 29 Go back on a deal
- 31 Aid for the Tin Man
- 35 Choreographer Alvin
- 37 Pop
- 38 Fork options
- 41 Old hand
- 43 Powell co-star
- 44 Addition-ally
- 45 Find a new owner
- 47 Separating
- 49 "Dead — Society"
- 52 Prohibit
- 53 Gitson or Brooks
- 54 Perfect
- 55 Daughter of Cadmus

Down

- 1 Train component
- 2 Have bills
- 3 O'Hara or O'Sullivan
- 4 Latin 101 word
- 5 "— Foolish Things"
- 6 Type of paper
- 7 Tend texts
- 8 Bagel topping
- 9 Phantom's balliwick
- 10 Less constrained
- 11 On edge
- 17 Hotel supply
- 19 Drive
- 21 Spanish preposition
- 22 Rage
- 24 Blackbird
- 26 Lea
- 28 "The Highway-man" poet
- 30 Joe's barracks-mates?
- 32 Irish girl
- 33 Commotion
- 34 What cynics say?
- 36 Without a remainder
- 38 Synagogue VIP
- 39 Allegheny River city
- 40 The Jetsons' dog
- 42 Lukewarm
- 45 Stench
- 46 California city
- 48 Type units
- 50 Playground pastime
- 51 Crafty

Answer to Previous Puzzle



11-12

CRYPTOQUIP

SO V XBTGSHSGQ HVY'Q
 HZAXDNQN BSG HBZLNG.
 XNLBVXG BN BVG QZZ AVYT

SZYGSYQBNOSLN.
 Yesterday's Cryptquip: IF I GRABBED A CERTAIN PART OF MY SHOE, A PERSON COULD SAY I'M HOLDING MY TONGUE.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: Q equals T

Boss' healing abilities lacking

Dear Abby: Last summer I was attacked by my boss' dog at work, leaving a nasty scar on my nose. My boss, claiming to be a "healing expert," advised me to avoid a trip to the doctor (as they don't put stitches in one's nose, he said) and to instead let him apply "healing oils" to my face. He said the scar would be gone within a month. I naively heeded his advice.

During my remaining time at work, his wife (also my boss and the true owner of the dog) looked after me caringly, always wishing me well on the healing, swearing genuineness by her husband's talents as a healer.

Three months and nine days later, the scar is still there, and in a recent trip to the doctor he informed me that I should have gotten stitches. I now face expensive plastic surgery if I want to be rid of the scar.

I am debating whether I should take legal action.

— **Downtrodden and Dog-Bitten**
Dear D&D: It should be as

Dear Abby



plain as the scar on your nose to your employers that your husband's "healing powers" failed in your case. Put them on notice that you will be getting a referral to a board-certified plastic surgeon or dermatologist to repair the damage to your face, and that you expect them or their insurance provider to pay the bill. If they give you an argument, consult a lawyer. Do not feel guilty. You are the victim. How the "healer" handles this letter will reveal whether he's truly a healer, or just a heel.

Dear Abby: Two months before our wedding, my fiancé, "Frank," and I called it off. We broke up completely for a while, hoping to resolve some problems before tying the knot. At the time, I had a maid of honor and five bridesmaids, all dearest, closest friends.

Since then we have all graduated, and now, a year after our

original wedding date, Frank and I engaged again.

A few of the girls who were supposed to be in the wedding party have drifted away, and as I plan my upcoming wedding, I'm wondering if I must re-invite every member of the original wedding party. I would prefer a smaller number of attendees, to make it a more special group. However, I'm afraid that if I do that, I'll irrevocably damage my friendship with some of these girls. I'd appreciate your advice.

— **Party-Pruning Bride in Ohio**

Dear Party-Pruner: As long as you explain to your girlfriends that you are scaling down the wedding in favor of something smaller and more special, they should understand and not be offended. Some of them may even be relieved to be off the hook for the dresses, shoes and other expenses that go along with the "honor."

Letters for this column — with your name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 6940, Los Angeles, CA 90069. Readers can write Abby online at the internet at <http://www.uspspress.com/dearabby>. Universal Press Syndicate.

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

EGGAU

VARBE

LEPPUR

EEFELC

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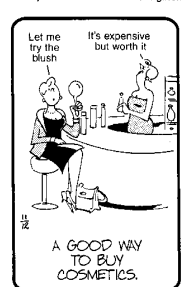
www.jumble.com

Ans: AT

Jumbles: ABOVE PUTTY DISMAY LIMER

Answer: What the defense did when the judge addressed the jury — RESTED

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Fiancee too attached to roommate

Dear Annie: I'm 40 years old and the single father of a teenage daughter. I've recently become engaged to my high school sweetheart, "Mona." I very much look forward to building a life with my new family, but there's a problem. Mona has a roommate, and she wants the roomie to live with us after we're married.

Mona is 29, and her roommate, "Jane," is 25. Mona never has been married or had children, and over the last few years she's come to regard Jane as a surrogate daughter. Jane is emotionally needy and has a hard time making decisions for herself, so she leans heavily on Mona to do her thinking for her. Although Jane's a sweet and friendly girl and I like her, I'm concerned that the four of us sharing a house is going to be a source of conflict.

We've discussed this, and Mona is very defensive about not giving up Jane. She wants Jane to live with us for a year or so until she finishes graduate school, but I



have a feeling that she'd be with us for the long haul.

— **Conflicted in Kentucky**
Dear Kentucky: How long has Mona lived with Jane that the relationship is so interdependent? And, we hate to ask, but are you certain about Mona's sexual orientation? This seems mighty strange to us.

If Jane is emotionally dependent, Mona should help her become self-sufficient instead of enabling her to remain immature and clingy.

She can still keep in close touch, but a loving "parent" does not encourage an adult child to move in with Mom and Dad. Please hash this out with Mona before making commitments.

Dear Annie: My children are 11 and 12 years old. Every year around the holidays, I try to teach them about giving to those less fortunate. In previous years we have served Thanksgiving dinner

at homeless shelters, and taken clothing and food to a day care center in the inner city.

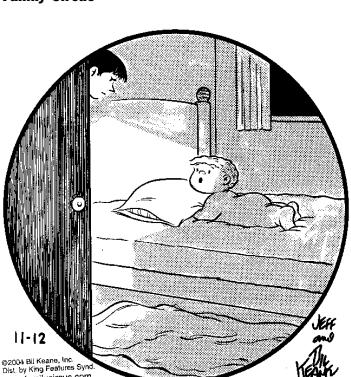
Well, (sigh), last year, we donated our children's old coats through a local collection program. I pulled the kids from school and took them along, but all they did was complain about missing school, and carry on about how much they didn't want to come. How do I help my children "get it"?

— **Trying to Help in Michigan**
Dear Michigan: Your kids are "getting it" more than you think. Don't let their whining convince you to leave them at home. In fact, involve them more in the process of selecting the items to give away, and envisioning the children who will use them. Even when they complain, they are absorbing the lessons of generosity and kindness, and when they are older, they undoubtedly will emulate your example.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045.

Creators Syndicate

Family Circus



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"Mommy! I lost my coverage!"

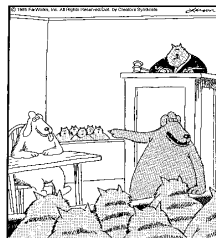


Dennis the Menace



"HE GAVE ME A DOLLAR AND SAID 'THANKS' FOR GIVING HIM SO MUCH BUSINESS."

The Far Side © Gary Larson



"A cat killer? Is that the face of a cat killer? Cat chaser maybe. But hey—who isn't?"

Non Sequitur



Louisville 'can't be stopped' — by TCU

BY CHRIS DUNCAN

The Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Louisville scored on its first three possessions and had a 17-0 lead before TCU even had a first down.

At the end of the half, the Cardinals led 27-7 and had 312 yards. Yet, coach Bobby Petrino still wasn't satisfied with his offense in the first half of the Cardinals' 55-28 victory Wednesday night.

"I got after our offense a little bit at halftime because I felt like we could be doing more," Petrino said.

The 12th-ranked Cardinals (7-1, 5-0 Conference USA) moved the ball just as easily in the second half, finishing with 587 yards.

"We did do some good things and ended up playing pretty well," he said.

Stefan Lewis threw three touchdown passes to help Louisville beat TCU for the first time in four meetings since 2001. LeFors, completing 75 percent of his passes coming into the game, went 13-for-21 for 275 yards and became the sixth Louisville quarterback to go over 5,000 career passing yards.

"There was no pressure. It was fun," LeFors said.

J.R. Russell and Broderick Clark each had two touchdown catches.

"If we come out and do what



Louisville running back Michael Bush (19) takes a handoff from quarterback Stefan LeFors on route to a 12-yard touchdown in the first quarter.

we do, we can't be stopped," Russell said. "We came out and took it to them."

TCU (4-5, 2-4) allowed at least 40 points for the fifth time this season after giving up 40 points only five times in the previous six seasons.

"We don't deserve to play on national TV right now," TCU coach Gary Patterson said.

Louisville's defense held TCU to 308 yards after giving up 603 in a 56-49 victory over Memphis last Thursday night.

Louisville topped 50 points for

the fourth time this season and went over 40 points for the ninth time in 21 games under Petrino, in his second year.

The Cardinals, leading the nation with 542 yards per game, raced to a 17-0 lead in the opening 6:53 — before the Horned Frogs got their initial first down.

Louisville took the opening kickoff and marched down the field in six plays, averaging 11 yards per snap. Michael Bush finished the drive with a 12-yard scoring run.

After a TCU punt, LeFors scrambled twice to get the Cardinals across midfield again. He found Russell for a 32-yard touchdown pass with 10:06 left in the first quarter.

On the ensuing kickoff, Louisville's J.T. Haskins stripped the ball from Cory Rodgers and Louisville's Harry Douglas recovered at the TCU 38.

Art Carmody finished the Cardinals' scoring spree with a 31-yard field goal. At that point, the Horned Frogs had gained only 7 yards on three plays and fumbled twice.

"We were able to get on them early and gain some momentum," Petrino said. "Once we got control and got in front of them, they didn't really feel like they could catch us."

LeFors started 4-for-4, then misfired on five straight passes before consecutive completions

to Tinch and Russell. Clark caught LeFors' next pass and outran a defender for a 42-yard touchdown play, Louisville's longest scoring reception of the season.

"We understood what they were going to do," Patterson said. "We just didn't make plays. At some point, you've just got to do your job."

The Cardinals' only misdeed came late in the first quarter, when Rodgers sneaked behind Louisville's Kerry Rhodes and caught a 72-yard touchdown pass from Tye Gunn.

Petrino replaced LeFors with freshman Brian Brohm late in the first quarter, the sixth time in eight games Petrino has made the first-half switch. Despite starting 1-for-6, Brohm drove the Cardinals for another field goal and a 27-7 lead.

Russell went over 100 yards receiving for the third straight game on a 25-yard touchdown pass from LeFors with 10:45 left in the third quarter. It was the third time this season LeFors has thrown three TD passes in a game.

Bush, who was a star quarterback in high school, threw a 48-yard touchdown pass to Clark later in the quarter.

Brohm returned in the fourth quarter and threw a 25-yard touchdown pass to tight end Gary Barnidge.

Orange still not ripe: Syracuse unable to shake slump

BY JOHN KEKIS

The Associated Press

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — The players hear it and so do the coaches.

The perception is out there that Syracuse football is in a downward spiral.

Is it? Or is the tradition-rich program just experiencing a temporary slump in this age of parity? Coach Paul Pasqualoni is 106-57-1 in 14 seasons at Syracuse and 6-2 in bowl games. But the Orange have struggled to break even the last three years after going 10-3 and finishing 14th in the nation in 2001.

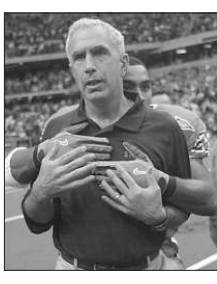
Syracuse was 4-8 in 2002, 6-6 last year, and is 5-4 this season with games left at Temple and Boston College. Since Donovan McNabb left for the NFL after the 1998 season, the Orange have played in the post-season only twice and have lost regular-season games to Big East weaklings Rutgers and Temple.

Rock-bottom might have come in September with a 51-0 loss at Purdue on national television, Syracuse's most lopsided season-opening defeat in 112 years of football.

All of that and more have evoked waves of criticism from fans desperate for a coaching change. There is even an anti-Pasqualoni Web site (CoachPunishGo.com). It doesn't seem to matter that most of Pasqualoni's players leave with a degree and the school is regularly cited by the NCAA for the football program's academic excellence.

Attendance for the five home games this season averaged 37,068, about three-quarters of capacity in the Carrier Dome. That's a far cry from 1992, Pasqualoni's second season, when a record average crowd of 49,325 turned out to watch his sixth-ranked Orange.

"We've been up, we've been down since



Syracuse coach Paul Pasqualoni, above left, has had his ups and downs in recent years, with people calling for him to be fired. Top players have spurned the Orange, who were the first to recruit Michael Hart, right, who grew up in Syracuse but plays for Michigan.

I've been here," said athletic director Jake Crouthamer, who has been on the job since 1978. "Is it alarming? I don't think so. But if it persists over a period of time, not two years, then it might be."

Pasqualoni, a workaholic who outwardly pays no attention to the tempest swirling about, and his staff face a challenge every year.

They have to persuade recruits to come to a school located in the snowiest major city in the nation, where they train in aging facilities and play on an artificial turf field that has seen better days. The Carrier Dome has changed little since it opened in 1980 and actually serves as a recruiting tool for rival colleges, as do all those empty seats.



AP photos

"Recruiting is more difficult because so many programs have made such a big commitment to this game," Pasqualoni said. "We have to improve our weight room. Weight rooms in this day and age are big, big issues in I-A football."

For the first time in years, Syracuse's athletic program has had to be subsidized by the university after being mostly self-sufficient. Part of that is the result of the defection this season of the Big East's two biggest draws — Miami and Virginia Tech — to the Atlantic Coast Conference.

The university has been a \$15 million building program and former Syracuse players and alumni who have struck it rich in the NFL, such as McNabb and Oakland

Raiders owner Al Davis, are being courted for contributions to the football program.

And although tradition is a wonderful thing, it only takes you so far. Kids today have to be told who former Syracuse greats Ernie Davis and Floyd Little were, and not every kid wants to play at home. Pasqualoni was the first coach to try to recruit record-setting tailback Michael Hart, who grew up in the Syracuse area. But Hart only wanted to go to Michigan and is now a freshman star for the Wolverines.

Post-McNabb continuity for the program was shattered when quarterback Michael Vick had a last-minute change of heart and decided to attend Virginia Tech instead of Syracuse. The plan was for Vick to redshirt but travel with the team, attend every meeting with McNabb, and be groomed to be his replacement.

"That was a huge setback, huge. I was very shocked," said Pasqualoni, who has struggled since to land a dynamic quarterback to run Syracuse's complex option offense.

The Orange's four losses this season have been ranked teams, which has only added to the discontent.

I can understand. We haven't produced in the past couple years," said offensive tackle Adam Terry said. "But you look around the country and you see the parity. You can look at a team that people consider atrocious the year before, now all of a sudden they're in the Top 25."

A seven-win season likely would bring a bowl bid. Senior tailback Walter Reyes wants the jury to reserve its decision until the end of the season.

"Every program goes through their hard times," said Reyes, the school's No. 2 career rushing leader. "But I really don't think you should count us out. I think we should get a fair chance, and after the season, if you want to, say what you have to say."

Having survived first half, Ravens feel fit to make run

BY DAVID GINSBURG
The Associated Press

OWINGS MILLS, Md. — They went six straight weeks without their best receiver, lost the defending NFL rushing champion for two games and watched in horror as their All-Pro left tackle tumbled to the turf with a pulled hamstring.

The Baltimore Ravens overcame a rash of injuries, the uneven play of quarterback Kyle Boller and the suspension of All-Pro running back Jamal Lewis to finish the first half of their schedule with the same record they had at the midpoint a year ago.

All told, no one is complaining about being 5-3.

"I'm pretty happy where we're at, given what we've gone through," Lewis said Wednesday. "I wish it was better, of course, but we're doing well given that we lost a couple of guys and haven't had everybody on the field at the same time this year."

Tight end Todd Heap, who led the Ravens in catches and receiving yards in 2003, sprained his ankle in the second game and has since taken up residence in the training room. He will miss a seventh consecutive game on Sunday against the New York Jets.

Left tackle Jonathan Ogden also is out, still limping from a hamstring pull Oct. 24. Defensive back Deion Sanders will probably miss Sunday's game with a toe injury.

Fortunately, the Ravens have been able to fill the holes. When Lewis was suspended for violating the NFL substance abuse policy, Chester Taylor and Musa Smith performed adequately in his place.

Terrell Suggs has made it easier for the Ravens to cope with the absence of linebacker Peter Boulware, who has yet to suit up this season because of a knee injury. Casey Bushch won the job as the starting center after replacing the injured Mike Flynn.

Depth is a key, but the primary reason that Baltimore remains just two games behind first-place Pittsburgh in the AFC North is its defense. The Ravens have yielded an NFL-low 113 points, forced 17 turnovers and scored four touchdowns on interception returns.

Ed Reed, the NFL's defensive player of the week after his record 106-yard interception return Sunday night in a 27-13 victory over Cleveland, believes the Ravens are poised to make a second-half run.

"It's going to be fun," he said. "The schedule suggests otherwise. Including Sunday's game against the Jets (6-2), the combined record of Baltimore's final four road opponents is an imposing 25-7."

"We've been here before," coach Brian Billick said. "We've been here before."

"That experience is huge, and those who weren't here can draw from the guys that were."



Ravens running back Jamal Lewis (31) is particularly fresh to help Baltimore make a second-half run after missing two games on suspension.

"We've been here before. We've been 5-3 or worse. That experience is huge, and those who weren't here can draw from the guys that were."

Brian Billick
Ravens coach

This team appears to be similar to all the rest under Billick in that it relies heavily on defense and the running game. The offense is ranked 32nd in the NFL and Boller is the 16th-rated quarterback in the AFC.

Although Boller has thrown only three touchdown passes compared to six interceptions, he went 24-for-38 for 223 yards two weeks ago against Philadelphia

and was 17-for-30 for 142 yards against the Browns.

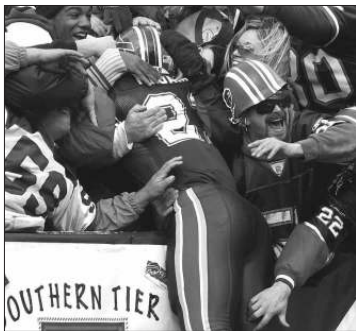
"I think I made strides the first eight weeks," he said. "I will continue to try and work hard each practice and learn new things, and hopefully by Game 16 I'll be full speed ahead."

Since Billick took over in 1999, the Ravens have gone 29-13 in November and December. The process begins in the summer, during a training camp that features a minimum of full-contact drills.

"The way we prepare for November is the key," Lewis said. "Guys are pretty much fresh, just because of the way Coach takes care of us in training camp and at the beginning of the season."

Lewis is particularly fresh, in part because of his mandated two-week vacation. He talked about not getting enough action after 22 carries again the Browns, but Wednesday he backed off that assertion.

"I just need enough to get away with a win," he said. "Every good playmaker feels like if the ball is in his hands, he can make something happen. I just want to be able to utilize all my talents on the field, so we can win comfortably."



Bills running back Willis McGahee celebrates a touchdown with fans on Sunday. He says the leap might become his standard celebration.

McGahee's leap also a giant step for Bills

BY JOHN WAWROW
The Associated Press

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — There's a jump in Willis McGahee's step, and a sudden leap to his touchdown celebration.

Any concerns Buffalo's running back had in overcoming reconstructive surgery on his left knee, which forced him to miss his entire rookie season last year, are fully behind him.

"I'm getting my swagger back," McGahee said on Wednesday.

Evidence of that followed his latest performance, in which he had a career-high 132 yards rushing and one touchdown, helping the Bills to a 22-17 victory over the New York Jets.

It was a game where McGahee unveiled his new touchdown celebration, leaping into the Ralph Wilson Stadium stands after he scored on a 12-yard scamper. McGahee described the celebration as spontaneous, because he was first considering doing some kind of dance.

"It's the McGahee leap," he said.

"Yeah, that's something we're going to start here in Buffalo from now on," McGahee said.

Coach Mike Mularkey is OK with it, but with one stipulation. "I like the emotion of it," Mularkey said. "But just don't blow a leg or a knee out."

The Bills can't afford to lose McGahee, the team's first-round pick in the 2003 draft, who supplanted Travis Henry as the starter last month.

The touchdown on Sunday was McGahee's third in two games. The win was Buffalo's third, all coming with McGahee as the starter.

And he now has three 100-yard outings, only the third player since 1970 to do so in his first three career starts, joining Tennessee's Chris Brown this year and former St. Louis Cardinal Stump Mitchell, who in four consecutive starts in the 1980s, something McGahee could match when the

Bills (3-5) travel to New England (7-1) this Sunday.

"Oh yeah? I didn't know that," McGahee said. "That's a great thing to hear about. But that's not my focus right now. My focus is to go out there and keep doing what I've been doing to maintain it."

What he's been doing is providing a smashmouth identity to what had been a sputtering offense, helping the Bills win three of their last four — the loss coming in Henry's last start against Baltimore on Oct. 24.

"He's added a big spark for us," guard Chris Villarrial said. "It's great to see him step in there the way he has. He's just taken over. We're really excited about him being back here."

Villarrial said he was watching college football's national championship game in 2003 when McGahee, playing for Miami, was hurt.

"To bounce back from something like that is pretty unbelievable," Villarrial said.

McGahee was rehabbing almost immediately after surgery, and he was jogging in front of scouts three months later in the weeks leading up to the draft.

Projected to be a top-three pick before he was hurt, McGahee wasn't drafted until the Bills selected him 23rd overall.

McGahee said he hasn't thought about his injured knee since proving he could play in a competitive setting, gaining 81 yards rushing and a touchdown in two preseason starts in place of an injured Henry.

Henry retained the starting job for the regular season but has struggled, managing just 300 yards and averaging 3.4 yards a carry in five starts.

McGahee has been more productive with 345 yards in his three starts, and averaging 3.7 yards a carry.

Deferring credit to his blockers, McGahee has a sense of the offense growing in confidence.

"We seem more happier every day," McGahee said. "We want to keep that feeling up, so we've got to keep doing what we've been doing."

Holmes likely out for Chiefs

The Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The Kansas City Chiefs placed linebacker Shawn Barber on injured reserve

NFL briefs

Wednesday and prepared for Sunday's game at New Orleans without All-Pro running back Priest Holmes.

Coach Dick Vermeil stopped just short of saying Holmes would definitely be out, but the league's leading rusher and scorer was on crutches after straining a medical collateral ligament in his right knee. None of his teammates expected him to play.

"There's not another Priest Holmes in the National Football League," fullback Tony Richardson said. "When a guy like that goes down it forces all of us to pick up our level of play."

Derrick Blockley, out last week with a deep thigh bruise, practiced full speed for the first time Wednesday and would start for the Chiefs (3-5) in Holmes' absence.

Blockley, a fifth-round draft choice out of Stephen F. Austin in 2001, has carried 32 times for 150 yards, a 4.7 average. When Holmes left early in the third quarter of a 56-10 victory over the Colts on Oct. 24, Blockley came in and ran for four touchdowns. He also has nine receptions for 95 yards.

If Holmes is out, Johnson, the disgruntled first-round draft pick of 2003, would back up Blockley. Meanwhile, linebacker Monty Beisel, who missed the past two weeks with a calf muscle injury, will be asked to join Quentin Caver in replacing Barber.

NFL injury update

Injuries to prominent NFL players, followed by team's prognosis. See Page 24 for complete injury report provided by the league.

Bills: OT Mike Williams (neck) questionable.
Buccaners: DT Anthony McFarland (knee) questionable.
Jets: DE Shaun Ellis (groin) questionable.
San Diego: QB Drew Brees (groin) questionable.
Steelers: RB Jerome Bettis (calf) probable.
Texans: RB Steve Watson (groin) questionable.
Patriots: QB Tom Brady (groin) questionable.
Colts: QB Peyton Manning (groin) questionable.
Chiefs: QB Matt Cassel (groin) questionable.
Cardinals: QB Kurt Warner (groin) questionable.
49ers: QB Steve Young (groin) questionable.
Seahawks: QB Matt Hasselbeck (groin) questionable.
Titans: QB Vince Young (groin) questionable.
Packers: QB Brett Favre (groin) questionable.
Giants: QB Eli Manning (groin) questionable.
Jets: QB Matt Ryan (groin) questionable.
Redskins: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.
Braves: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.
Phillies: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.
Yankees: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.
Red Sox: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.
Angels: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.
Rangers: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.
Astros: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.
Mariners: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.
Padres: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.
Diamondbacks: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.
Rockies: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.
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Ottawa: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.
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Jacksonville: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.
Miami: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.
New England: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.
New Orleans: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.
New York: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.
Philadelphia: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.
Pittsburgh: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.
San Antonio: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.
San Jose: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.
Seattle: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.
Tampa Bay: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.
Washington: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.
Winnipeg: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.
Winnipeg: QB Tim Lincecum (groin) questionable.

Titans QB McNair frustrated by lingering chest injury

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Steve McNair wants to help his Tennessee Titans start winning games while redeeming his own sub-par performance this season.

If only his chest would stop hurting whenever he gets out of bed or throws a pass.

The NFL's co-MVP of 2003 has played through pain from a list of injuries, but he said Wednesday he still can't take a direct hit 2½ weeks after being knocked out of the Titans' 20-3 loss at Minnesota on Oct. 24.

"I'm trying to fight through some of the pain and get some throwing in. The thing we're worried about now is, 'Can I take a hit?' If I do take the right hit, it's going to knock me out, it's going to take three more weeks," McNair said.

McNair, who threw passes in drills on Wednesday, is listed as questionable on injury report, and coach Jeff Fisher called McNair's condition "encouraging."

He said the quarterback's availability will be a game-time decision Sunday against Chicago (3-5).

DE Ahanotu returns to Chiefs

TAMPA, Fla. — Defensive end Chidi Ahanotu, who spent the first eight seasons of his 12-year NFL career with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, rejoined his old team Wednesday, adding depth to a line that's been depleted by injuries the past three games.

To make room on the roster, center John Wade was placed on injured reserve with a dislocated left knee.

Spurrier rules out return to NFL

The Associated Press

AINESVILLE, Fla. — Steve Spurrier wants to return to college coaching.

Spurrier told several newspapers he has no intentions returning to the NFL after spending two losing seasons with the Washington Redskins.

Spurrier left Florida in 2002 after 12 winning seasons, six Southeastern Conference championships and a national title. He went 12-20 with the Redskins and resigned after last season.

"I probably decided that this was done with the NFL," he told The Gainesville Sun. "It was the lifestyle best for me. You don't have scout teams in the NFL. When I was at Florida, I worked with the quarterback every snap for two hours. It wasn't that way in the NFL."

Miami Dolphins coach Dave Wannstedt resigned Tuesday, prompting speculation that Spurrier would bring his famedவர் and playbooks to South Florida. But Spurrier told Florida Today that NFL teams shouldn't even bother pursuing him.

"I've said recently to several people that if I get back coaching, it will probably be a good college job somewhere," Spurrier said. "It seems like I'm better suited for that. I know I certainly had a lot more success in the college game than in the NFL. So if I return to coaching, I think that would probably be the best idea."

Spurrier withdrew his name from consideration to return to Florida, where Ron Zook was fired last month after two-plus seasons.

Spurrier said he would prefer to coach in a warm-weather climate. South Carolina? North Carolina? How about Texas? He declined to say.

"I can't answer all that. In the next two or three weeks, once the season is over, we'll see what happens," he told The Sun. "I think I've made it clear now that if I go back into coaching, it'll be at a good state university, a college job. Hopefully it will be in the South. I'd rather not get up there in the North."



Serena Williams, above, celebrates a 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 victory over Anastasia Myskina in the WTA Championships on Wednesday in Los Angeles.

U.S. sprinter Young gets banned for life

The Associated Press

DENVER — Sprinter Jerome Young, a central figure in a doping case that could cost the U.S. relay team its gold medal from Sydney, was banned for life by the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency on Wednesday following his second positive test for a banned drug.

Young tested positive for EPO during a Paris meet in July, USAUSA said. He is believed to be the first sprinter to test positive for EPO, which is popular with endurance runners and cyclists.

Young, 28, tested positive for the steroid nadrolone in 1999, but was exonerated by a U.S. appeals panel in July 2000, avoiding a two-year ban. He ran in the opening and semifinal rounds of the 2000 Games, but not in the 1,600-meter final anchored by Michael Johnson.

All six members of the relay squad received gold medals, but Young's was stripped.

Other members of the team include 30-year-old Alvin Harrison, who accepted a four-year suspension in October for drug violations uncovered in the BALCO case. Harrison's twin and Sydney teammate, Calvin Harrison, is serving a two-year suspension for testing positive for drugs linked to the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative.

The Harrison cases and the latest involving Young all came after the Sydney Games. But track's world governing body, the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), has recommended declaring the entire Sydney relay team ineligible because of Young.

Last month, the U.S. Olympic Committee challenged the recommendation in a petition lodged with the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne, Switzerland. Young, who has denied using a prohibited substance, was not covered by the appeal.

"As a matter of course, we don't comment on specific individual drug cases," said Jill Geer, spokeswoman for USA Track & Field.

Daryl Selby, a spokesman for the USOC in nearby Colorado Springs, said Young's suspension should not affect the case pending

Sports briefs

before the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

"We have complete confidence in the fairness of CAS proceedings and do not believe that the decision announced today will have any bearing on that proceeding."

The CAS has not set a date for a hearing, he said.

Serena wins WTA opener

LOS ANGELES — Serena Williams rallied from a set and two service breaks down to beat French Open champion Anastasia Myskina 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 in the WTA Championships on Wednesday.

U.S. Open winner Svetlana Kuznetsov made a second-set collapse and held on to defeat Vera Zvonareva 6-2, 6-4 in round-robin play.

Lindsay Davenport, the world's No. 1 player, defeated Elena Dementieva 6-0, 6-1.

The players are assigned to Red and Black four-woman groups. The two players with the best records from each group advance to Sunday's semifinals.

UCLA guard Bozeman out for season after knee surgery

LOS ANGELES — UCLA guard Cedric Bozeman, who was expected to start, underwent arthroscopic surgery on his right knee Wednesday and will miss the upcoming season.

The 2½-hour surgery came after Bozeman got hurt in practice last week. He stepped on a teammate's ankle and then fell on his left ankle and right knee, tearing the anterior cruciate ligament.

Rodman signs with ABA team

COSTA MESA, Calif. — Seven-time NBA rebounding champion Dennis Rodman signed a contract with the Orange County-based Crush on the American Basketball Association.

Rodman, trying to launch a comeback for several years, played on NBA championship teams in Detroit and Chicago, and played three games last season for the ABA championship Long Beach Jam.

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Santana wins AL Cy Young

Twins left-hander unanimous choice

BY RONALD BLUM

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Johan Santana of the Minnesota Twins was a unanimous pick for the American League Cy Young Award on Thursday, rewarded for a stellar season half that helped his team win its third straight division title.

Santana went 20-6 and led the AL with a 2.61 ERA and 265 strikeouts, going 13-0 with a 1.21 ERA in 15 starts after the All-Star break.

He received all 28 first-place votes from the Baseball Writers' Association of America, becoming the first unanimous Cy Young winner since Arizona's Randy Johnson two years ago and the first in the AL since Boston's

Minnesota Twins pitcher Johan Santana went 20-6 and led the American League with a 2.61 ERA and 265 strikeouts, going 13-0 with a 1.21 ERA in 15 starts after the All-Star break.

Pedro Martinez in 2000. He is the 18th unanimous winner overall, the seventh in the AL.

Curt Schilling, 21-6 with a 3.26 ERA in his first season with the Red Sox, received 27 second-place votes and one third for 82 points. Voting was conducted before the start of the postseason, when Schilling pitched despite an injured ankle and helped Boston win the World Series for the first time since 1918.

Schilling, who led the major leagues in wins, has never won a Cy Young Award. He was runner-up for the third time, tying Johnson, a five-time winner, and 1957 winner Warren Spahn for the most second-place finishes.

Mariano Rivera of the New York Yankees, who led the major leagues with a career-high 53 saves, received the other second-place vote and 24 thirds for 27 points.

Santana, the Venezuelan to win the award, had a breakout season after going 12-3 for the Twins in 2003. He is eligible for free agency after the 2006 season.

Santana lost in salary arbitration last February and earned \$1.6 million salary with no bonuses. Schilling, who had a \$1.2 million salary, earned a \$400,000 bonus for finishing second.

Houston's Roger Clemens won the NL honor Tuesday, his record seventh Cy Young Award.

Replay: Umpires made correct calls on disputed plays in postseason

REPLAY, FROM BACK PAGE

Garcia worried that not every ballpark would be equipped with equal cameras to show replays from all angles. He also said that would change the concept of umpires huddling on close calls helped "take away the idea of instant replay."

Garcia was involved in one of the most disputed calls in October memory. He was working the right-field line in the 1996 ALCS when young fan Jeffrey Maier reached over the wall and grabbed the ball before Baltimore's Tony Tarasco could make a play, and it wound up as a home run for Derek Jeter.

This year, the umps eventually did make the right calls in key spots at the end of the year.

In mid-September, Manny Ramirez cleared the bases after his drive to left field was ruled fair. Moments later, the umpires correctly said the Boston star's shot hooked foul.

In Game 6 of the ALCS, Mark Bellhorn's drive to left field was originally ruled in play after it hit a fan in the front row at Yankee Stadium. After the umpires got together, it was rightly called a home run.

Later in that game, Rodriguez wound up on second base after he swatted at Boston pitcher Bronson Arroyo's arm and knocked the ball loose. After all six umpires huddled, plate umpire Joe West said he had a better view than first-base ump Randy Marsh and called Rodriguez out.

New Seattle manager Mike Hargrove thinks replay on such plays might help.

"They got it right with A-Rod, but it could be a benefit," he said. "I mean, I don't want to see us spend 15 minutes waiting on whether a ball is fair or foul. And not on balls and strikes. But I could see it happening on selected plays."

Atlanta GM John Schuerholz looked forward to Thursday morning's debate.

"I think it's an appropriate topic to discuss," he said.

"With modern technology, it's worth talking about. 'I'm not sure how I ultimately feel about it,' he said. "But I'm open-minded, and want to hear what people have to say."

C. mayor endorses private stadium funds

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Washington Mayor Anthony A. Williams agreed Wednesday to consider a plan by District of Columbia Chair Linda W. Cropp that calls for the city to consider private financing for the proposed ballpark for the Expos.

"By all means we want to do that, and I certainly fully endorse it," Williams said, adding that any deal must accommodate the city's agreement with the Expos, which contains a Dec. 31 for financing to become law.

Cropp postponed Tuesday's scheduled vote on the mayor's ballpark plan for two weeks.

"Let's just see what happens," she said. "I think it can be achieved," she said, adding she had a "responsibility to do everything we can to reduce the cost" of the \$435 million project.

Cropp claims one financier has approved her offer of \$30 million, but she declined to identify the investor.

City officials said a private investor would not be able to profit from the revenue promised to the Expos, such as naming rights for the stadium or concession income. Cropp said the city's incentive would be profits through a "tax advantage."

"It can be win-win," D.C. Sports and Entertainment Commission chairman Mark Toulley said. "I think there are much better proposals that we're going to be seeing."

The votes of seven of 13 council members are needed for approval.

Stottlemire says he will return for 2005, then retire
NEW YORK — Mel Stottlemire will return as pitching coach of the New York Yankees next year, then retire after the 2005 season.

Stottlemire has been pitching coach since manager Joe Torre was hired before the 1996 season.

"I've been talking about retirement for about three years," Stottlemire said Wednesday. "Each year I've changed my mind at the end of the season. I'll be 64 years old at this time at the end of next year, and it's probably time."

Joe Girardi will replace Willie Randolph as bench coach.

Girardi, who caught for the Yankees from 1996-99, retired when he was cut by New York at the end of spring training and was a broadcaster for the YES network during the season.

Randolph was hired last week as manager of the New York Mets.

Pirates re-sign Mesa, Torres
PITTSBURGH — The Pittsburgh Pirates brought back their two top relievers Thursday, agreeing with closer Jose Mesa on a \$2.5 million, one-year contract and with setup man Solomon Torres on a two-year deal that avoided salary arbitration.

Mesa, who converted 43 of 48 saves chances during the 2004 comeback season, will make \$2 million next year, with Pittsburgh getting a \$4 million option for 2006 that includes a \$500,000 buyout. Mesa had a \$800,000 base salary last season and earned \$465,000 in performance bonuses

Briefs

after signing with Pittsburgh as a minor league free agent.

The right-handed Mesa was let go by the Phillies after losing the closer's job in 2003, when he went 5-7 with a 6.52 ERA as converted 42 of 48 save opportunities.

Torres, 32, made \$750,000 while going 7-7 with a 2.64 ERA in a team-high 84 appearances last season — the most by a Pirates reliever since Kent Tekulve pitched in 85 games in 1982.

Matsuzaka leads Japan over major league stars

SAPPORO, Japan — Japanese pitcher Daisuke Matsuzaka picked the right spot to showcase his talent.

He pitched a complete game Thursday in leading the Japanese All-Stars past the touring major league stars 5-1 in Game 6 of an eight-game exhibition series. The major leaguers led the series 4-2.

Matsuzaka, perhaps the best pitcher in Japan, hopes to play in the majors.

"Without a question he could pitch in the major leagues," manager Bruce Bochy of the major league All-Stars said. "He has four major league pitches, he has a good idea of what he's doing on the mound. It's hard to compare him to anybody because of his unique delivery."

The 24-year-old right-hander has played six years in Japan's professional league and must wait three more before becoming a free agent.

Matsuzaka gave up one run on five hits while striking out six for the win. The major leaguers scored their only run in the bottom of the sixth when Jack Wilson of Pittsburgh doubled in Tampa Bay outfielder Carl Crawford from first.

Williams would welcome Beltran to Yankees

KEY BISCAYNE, Fla. — Whatever position he winds up playing, Bernie Williams would welcome Carlos Beltran to the New York Yankees.

Beltran is a prime free agent, and the Yankees are expected to pursue him hard. He plays center field, the same spot Williams has held down in the Bronx since 1997.

Recently, Beltran told Houston reporters that Williams offered this season to move aside for him in 2005. On Tuesday night, agent Scott Boras — who represents both players — added "that's something they've talked about and dealt with."

On Wednesday, Williams put a slightly different spin on what they said.

"It was kind of like a lighter-toned conversation in-between batting practice," Williams said. "I think he took it as I took it. Kind of like a lighthearted, kind of like the middle of the bat."

"I admire your skill and it would be good if you came to our team." "But I didn't make any big deal out of it and I think, at that time, he didn't make a big deal out of it. I think, at this point, that's all I know," he said.

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NASCAR lifts ban on liquor sponsors

BY MIKE HARRIS
The Associated Press

NASCAR has lifted its ban on hard-liquor ads on cars, easing restrictions aimed at cleaning up the image of a sport that traces its roots to pool of boys running moonshine through the hills of Georgia and the Carolinas.

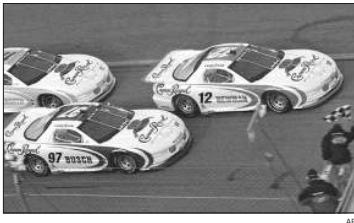
"We felt the time was right," NASCAR president Mike Helton said Wednesday. "Attitudes have changed, and sports companies have a long record of responsible advertising."

NASCAR already allowed beer and malt liquor sponsorships. Budweiser sponsors Dale Earnhardt Jr.'s car, for example, and Busch sponsors a lower-tier racing series.

NASCAR had restricted what liquor companies could do since the sport's modern era began in 1972. Most recently denying a bid from Roush Racing in June to put a liquor company on the car that Jeff Burton drove. However, International Speedway Corp., a sister company also controlled by NASCAR's founding France family, has agreements with Crown Royal.

Dino, a British liquor company that was already an associate sponsor for Matt Kenseth with its Smirnoff ICE malt beverage, immediately announced Wednesday that its Crown Royal distilled whiskey will be the sponsor on another Roush car next season.

"Our association with this world-class racing team will allow us to connect with millions of adult consumers, who are devoted NASCAR fans," and remind them about the importance of responsible drinking," Dineo spokesman Mark Waller said. "A



Ryan Newman (12) takes the checkered flag ahead of Kurt Busch (97) and Matt Kenseth (17) to win an IROC race at Daytona last February. All three cars were sponsored by Crown Royal. NASCAR returned to its roots on Wednesday by lifting a ban on liquor ads on cars, opening the door for teams to be sponsored next season by distilled spirits.

multimillion dollar marketing budget supporting this sponsorship will include dedicated social responsibility messaging."

Enjoying tremendous growth in mainstream popularity lately, the racing league landed a \$2.8-billion television contract with NBC and Fox that began in 2001, and this season switched the sponsorship of its top division from cigarette-maker R.J. Reynolds' Winston brand to telecommunications giant Nextel.

As part of the scrubbing-up process, Helton told drivers in February to watch their language on radio and television. Earnhardt Jr. was fined and lost points for using profanity during a post-race interview on TV.

Helton said any liquor companies entering NASCAR must follow advertising guidelines set by the sanctioning body.

"Any sports company involved in NASCAR will have marketing campaigns strongly grounded in responsibility and will follow advertising and marketing guidelines by NASCAR that are consistent with the Distilled Spirits Council's advertising code," Helton said.

NASCAR's review before deciding to lift the ban included outreach to advocacy groups such as the National Commission Against Drunk Driving, Mothers Against Drunk Driving and industry groups such as the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States.

John Moulden, president of the National Commission Against

Drunk Driving, said he is impressed with NASCAR's approach to the policy change.

"They appear to be trying to do it right," Moulden said.

"When we talked with NASCAR, I stressed to them how important NASCAR is to young males, who make up the majority of drunk drivers. They told us that any advertising done in NASCAR by breweries or distillers, they'll make sure it is directed at the legal age audience and not to kids and that they will require 20 percent of advertising dollars go toward promoting responsible drinking."

"I'd like to see that same type of responsibility by all sports and advertisers."

Helton said internal discussions about allowing distilled spirits companies into the sport have been going on for at least 12 years, but the topic kept coming up this season.

"I can't point to a specific issue that made us change our opinion as much as the topic just recurring to the point where we said, 'Look, what's wrong with this? Why should we not do this?'" Helton said.

"I think the feedback that we get is that the core fan of NASCAR, which we feel like represents Americana as much as any sport does, is OK with spirits whether they are here or not as sponsors," he said. "And we also feel like the American public in general understands and accepts the fact that that's part of everyday life."

Cops busted for giving Elliott a ride

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Two Georgia State Patrol troopers were suspended without pay for letting NASCAR driver Bill Elliott hop a ride in their helicopter when they were supposed to be reporting about marijuana fields.

The troopers spent two hours shuttling Elliott from his home in Dawsonville, where he had dropped off an airplane, to Blairsville, where Elliott's car was parked.

Cpl. Kevin Coalson, the pilot, was suspended for three days last week. Lt. Eddie Williams began a six-day suspension Monday. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported.

During the Dec. 9 flight over northern Georgia, Elliott, a licensed helicopter pilot, took the controls of the surplus military

Racing briefs

aircraft intended only for law enforcement.

Meanwhile, anti-drug officers on the ground waited for details about the location of the marijuana fields.

The newspaper said the troopers couldn't be reached for comment Wednesday. According to investigative files, they said they didn't know there was anything wrong with giving Elliott a ride.

Waltrip heads to Hall of Fame

TALLADEGA, Ala. — Three-time NASCAR champion Darrell Waltrip heads the latest class of inductees into the International Motorsports Hall of Fame.

Waltrip is joined by longtime

drag racing stars Joe Amato and Bob Glidden, powerboat champion Chip Hanauer and Formula One and CART champion Nigel Mansell.

"This is a powerful class, one in which each member had a significant impact on the history of this particular form of racing," Jim Freeman, executive director of the Hall of Fame, said Wednesday. "All five of them have won multiple championships. It is quite a group."

Waltrip won 84 races and Winston Cup titles in 1981, 1982 and 1985.

Amato had 54 NHRA Top Fuel wins and five division championships. Glidden captured 10 Pro Stock titles and 85 race victories.

Hanauer won seven Unlimited Hydroplane national and world titles and 61 national events, including a record 11 Gold Cup races.

Mixe up NASCAR sends confusing message by approving liquor sponsorships

Mixed messages, like too many mixed cocktails, can cause a nasty hangover.

NASCAR is setting itself up for a haul of a head-splitter by trying to reconcile hard-liquor ads on race cars with efforts to spiff up the image of a sport that traces its roots to moonshine runners. It's kind of schizo-marketing to extol a wholesome "family values" business while drivers are behind the wheels of speeding cars painted like beer cans and, soon, Jack Daniel's and other whiskey bottles.

In NASCAR's world, where the name of the game is sponsorship, drinking and driving go together a little too neatly.

As a driver, though, should risk saying he likes his hops or sour mash too blankly much. Cussing, as Dale Earnhardt Jr. discovered, is punishable by points.

One level, the decision Wednesday to lift the ban on hard-liquor ads is no big deal. Budweiser sponsors Earnhardt's car, Matt Kenseth has a deal with Smirnoff ICE malt beverage, and Busch sponsors a whole lower-tier racing series. There's enough beer poured by fans at a race to float all the boats.

So why should anyone get worked up over letting the drivers hawk higher-proof booze? Whiskey, beer, wine? It's all alcohol and it's all legal, unlike the moonshine that the good 'ol boys barreled through the hills of Georgia and the Carolinas way back when.

Let's not cry out for a return to Prohibition but let's not kid ourselves that a sport like NASCAR, and the sponsorship behind it, doesn't influence its fans, young and old.

Let's not pretend that there's no incoherence in the drinking/drinking bargain that NASCAR has struck. More than 17,000 people die and a half-million are injured every year because of drunken driving.

NASCAR knows it's on dangerous ground here, no matter how lucrative the deals might be. President Mike Helton went to great pains to sugarcoat the mixed message by emphasizing the "long record of responsible advertising" by the spirits companies.

That's questionable, but there also is the real wreckage caused by drunken drivers in the 18-to-34 male demographic that is quickly and assiduously and successfully cultivated.

"Any sports company involved in NASCAR will have marketing campaigns strongly grounded in responsibility and will follow advertising and marketing guidelines set by NASCAR that are consistent with the Distilled Spirits Council's advertising code," Helton said.

He said NASCAR reached out

to advocacy groups such as the National Commission Against Drunk Driving and Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

John Moulden, president of the National Commission Against Drunk Driving, was impressed with the way NASCAR approached the change of policy.

"They told us that any advertising done in NASCAR was full of beer and distillers, they'll make sure it is directed at the legal age audience and not to kids and that they will require 20 percent of advertising dollars go toward promoting responsible drinking."

"We'd like to see that same type of responsibility by all sports and advertisers."

Problem is, there are plenty of NASCAR fans under 21 watching those alcohol ads going around the track and making the obvious connection with life in the fast lane.

Wendy Hamilton, president of MADD, is holding back judgment, saying the only contact she had with NASCAR was a few e-mails and an agreement to participate on an advisory committee.

Personally, she said, she's always thought it was "absurd" to put alcohol ads on cars. But she emphasized that MADD is not a prohibitionist organization and does not oppose alcohol advertising aimed at drinkers over 21.

NASCAR, which, she says, has the opportunity to be a player in this world when it comes to drunk driving because clearly not all the people promoting the message are Hamilton said.

"Our position is very clear. We're going to be talking about all alcohol, not just the distilled spirits industry, and our message is no underage drinking and don't mix drinking and driving."

Every sport should be sending the same message. Binge drinking on college campuses, especially at football and basketball games, is huge.

"There isn't a single area of sports in this country where some athlete hasn't been convicted for drunk driving or has hurt somebody driving drunk," Hamilton said.

Just last week, 19-year-old, six-time Olympic champion swimmer Michael Phelps was arrested and charged with drunken driving in Maryland, where the legal drinking age is 21.

"I want to say that last week I made a mistake. I wanted to share with you some of the things getting in a car with anything to drink is wrong, dangerous and is unacceptable," Phelps said.

Hamilton called Phelps' actions "very disappointing" but said "he still has an opportunity to be a great role model by doing the right thing and accepting the consequences and never doing it again."

NASCAR has a chance, too, to be a model for sports and do more than simply make money off its beer and liquor deals. The sobering thought it can't afford to pass up.

Steve Wilstein is a national sports columnist and writer. He writes from Milwaukee. Write to him at swilstein@ap.org.

RACING STRIPES

A WEEKLY LOOK AT MOTORSPORTS

NexTel Cup's own Final Four

Title chase down to Busch, Gordon, Earnhardt and Johnson

BY JENNA FRYER

The Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — OK, so this was what NASCAR had in mind when it came up with its radical new points system.

NASCAR wanted a playoff series, like something other major sports use to crown its champion. What it got is the Final Four on wheels.

Top-nine drivers head into the final two races in a flag-to-flag points race, a scenario NASCAR officials could only have dreamed about when they created the 10-man, 10-race playoff system at the start of the season.

Kurt Busch had been building a steady lead in the standings, but mediocre runs in the past two weeks have sliced his lead from 59-points to 41 over Jeff Gordon. Dale Earnhardt Jr. and Jimmie Johnson are right on Busch's bumper, too.

All three challengers are within 48 points of the leader. The last time four drivers had a chance at the title this late in the season was 1992, when Alan Kulwicki, Bill Elliott, Dave Allison and Harry Gant went into the final two events separated by 113 points.

So, what kind of racing should we see in the next two weeks?

"It's going to be aggressive, hard racing," said Gordon, seeking his fifth title. "Anybody who has a shot at it is going to be on an edge and feel more pressure. They're going to be driving aggressive or they're going to be thinking about it too much and make a mistake."

The three challengers all think Busch is in the worst position.

He was seemingly on his way to a runaway championship after six races, overcoming every prob-



Dale Earnhardt Jr. (8) passes Jeff Gordon for the lead during the final laps of the NASCAR Checker Auto Parts 500 on Sunday at Phoenix International Raceway in Avondale, Ariz. Earnhardt Jr. went on to win and Gordon finished third as both drivers closed in on Kurt Busch in the NexTel Cup driver standings.

lem thrown his way while building a 100-point lead in the standings.

Then his engine blew up in Atlanta and all of his challengers finished in front of him in Phoenix last week.

"You've got a guy who's got to be careful," Gordon said, referring to Busch. "I kind of like the position I'm in right now because the No. 97 has to be more cautious than I do."

But Busch insists he wouldn't trade the position he's in. When asked about his favorite to win the NexTel Cup, he didn't hesitate.

"I'd have to go with a vote toward the 97 team," he said.

"With the way we've been competitive at some of the short tracks, as well as the speedways, and just being able to outpace the competitors."

NASCAR's Final Four hits high

gear Sunday with the final Southern 500 at Darlington Raceway.

Gordon is the best driver there, with six victories on NASCAR's oldest superspeedway. But his most recent win there was in 2001, and he's struggled since then with finishes of 33rd, 32nd and 41st in his three most recent trips.

Busch was second, 13th and sixth in his last three visits.

Earnhardt, who pulled within 47 points of Busch by winning in Phoenix, struggles at Darlington. He's winless there, with finishes of sixth, 25th and 10th in his last three races.

He's no better at Homestead, site of the season finale, where he has finishes of 13th, 15th, 21st and 24th.

"We haven't dominated those race tracks, Darlington or Homestead, but with the team that

we've got now, I feel like we can go in there and have a weekend that we've never had at either one of those tracks," he said.

"We'll be in Homestead all week really working our guts out every day in testing and trying to get it right. We thought about it last weekend and want to put ourselves back in position to win."

"We've got a lot to gain. These guys ain't going to be easy to beat."

But Busch isn't worried about any of the challengers, even Johnson, who won three consecutive races to climb back into contention.

"They've got to catch us," Busch said. "We're in the best position to continue to move forward. They have to reach out and gain positions and take advantage of other people sliding around on the track, and put their cars in awkward positions."



CHASE IN NEXTEL CUP
Top five contenders

Kurt Busch

CAR: No. 97 Sharpie Ford
POINTS: 419
CHASE POSITION: Second, 6130

WHAT HAPPENED: Busch almost ran out of gas before he was able to pit at Phoenix, and he was stalled as he sat in traffic at the service road. He then lost even more ground when a caution came out. Still, he pulled to a 10th place finish and held onto his lead in the standings.

SPEAKING: "With our hiccups out in Phoenix, it's now a fresh start for these final two races because now it just seems like we've got less and less competitors to look at and less and less competitors to beat out on the race track." Busch

Jeff Gordon

CAR: No. 24 Mobil 1 Chevrolet
POINTS: 418
CHASE POSITION: Third, 6140

WHAT HAPPENED: Gordon gained 31 points on the leader by finishing third. He trails Busch by 41 as he heads into the Southern 500 at Darlington — a race Gordon has won three times.

SPEAKING: "We're second in the points with only two races left, so we need to be aggressive. The pressure will keep building and it will become more intense," Gordon said.

Dale Earnhardt Jr.

CAR: No. 8 Budweiser Chevrolet
POINTS: 417
CHASE POSITION: Fourth, 6143

WHAT HAPPENED: Earnhardt won in Phoenix for the first time, finishing third. He trails Busch by 41 as he heads into the Southern 500 at Darlington — a race Earnhardt has won three times.

SPEAKING: "For us, there is no strategy. We've given back so many points we should have a lot of room to breathe. Even though we're not in the lead, it's still past-gut, gut-out racing. We need to go out there and win each race. If we win the cup, cool. If we lose, it's a learning experience. That's the way we've had," Earnhardt said.

Jimmie Johnson

CAR: No. 48 Lowe's Chevrolet
POINTS: 416
CHASE POSITION: Fifth, 6146

WHAT HAPPENED: Johnson gained 11 points on Busch but is still 48 points out of first place in the Chase. He's second in the standings after finishing sixth.

SPEAKING: "I'm absolutely shocked that I'm back in the middle of this points race. Winning races has put us back in that situation, plus some bad luck on other guys part," Johnson said.

Mark Martin

CAR: No. 6 Viagra Ford
POINTS: 415
CHASE POSITION: Sixth, 6149

WHAT HAPPENED: Martin called the Chase a "crapshoot." He's 15th in Phoenix and falling 102 points behind Johnson.

SPEAKING: "We've had a lot better over the last 10 races than the first 10 races. We've had good cars, but we've had trouble getting them to work. We need to be as good as we can be the season out with a couple of really strong efforts," Martin said.

— Jenna Fryer, The Associated Press

NASCAR NEXTEL CUP

Race 35: Mountain Dew 500, 7 p.m. Sunday CET, AFN-Sports.

Last race: Dale Earnhardt Jr. moved back into the championship chase by winning the Checker Auto Parts 500 at Phoenix International Raceway. He jumped from fifth to third in the driver standings and moved within 47

points of series leader Kurt Busch, who finished 10th.

Last year: Terry Labonte ended a 156-race winless streak with a victory in the Southern 500 at Darlington.

DRIVERS TO WATCH

Jeff Gordon has six wins at Darlington, including 37 races at Darlington from 1995-96 and one before. But he has finished by one of the worst in the 10 Chase for the title races at the track, including two DNPs.

Mark Martin has scored 22 Darlington, including 10 top-10 finishes in 1995-96 and one before. He has finished by one of the worst in the 10 Chase for the title races at the track, including two DNPs.

Jeff Burton, a two-time Darlington winner, has scored 10 top-10 finishes in 1995-96 and one before. He has finished by one of the worst in the 10 Chase for the title races at the track, including two DNPs.

NexTel Cup qualifying record
Ward Burton, 173.737 mph, 1996
NexTel Cup race record
Dale Earnhardt, 139.98 mph, March 28, 1993

FAST FACTS

Jimmie Johnson won the Carolina Dodge Dealers 400 at Darlington on March 21. No driver has swept both races at the track since Jeff Burton in 1995. The 48 points separating the top four drivers in the standings is the closest with two races remaining since four drivers were separated by 13 points in 1992.

POINTS RACE

After 34 of 36 races
1. Kurt Busch 6,191
2. Jeff Gordon 6,130
3. Dale Earnhardt Jr. 6,144
4. Jimmie Johnson 6,143
5. Mark Martin 6,089
6. Tony Stewart 6,049
7. Ryan Newman 6,041
8. Elliott Sadler 5,889
9. Matt Kenseth 5,805
10. Jeremy Mayfield 5,836
11. Jamie McMurray 4,296
12. Dale Jarrett 4,017
13. Casey Kasey 4,070
14. Kevin Harvick 4,072
15. Bobby Labonte 4,007
16. Jeff Burton 3,723
17. Rusty Wallace 3,704
18. Michael Waltrip 3,702
19. Joe Nemechek 3,649
20. Greg Biffle 3,616

BUSCH SERIES

This week: Bill Lo 200 at Darlington, S.C. (Track-delayed, 1 a.m. Sunday, AFN-Sports).
Last race: Jamie McMurray and Kyle Busch swapped the lead twice in the final 17 laps, but McMurray used a surprising outside pass on a restart to win the Budweiser Supermarket 200 at Phoenix International Raceway.

Next year: Teenage teammates Brian Vickers and Busch finished 1,2 in the Winn-Dixie 200 at Darlington Raceway. Vickers crossed the line 1.277-second ahead of 10 car lengths — ahead of Busch.

Fast facts: Busch, second in each of the last two races, is within 163 points of leader Martin Truex Jr. with two races left. Truex needs to add 30 points to his total to clinch the championship.

Next race: Ford 300, Nov. 20, Homestead, Fla.

CRAFTSMAN TRUCK

This week: Darlington 200 at Darlington, S.C. (Live, 2 a.m. Saturday, AFN-Alt).
Last race: David Starr won the Chevy Silverado 150 at Phoenix International

Raceway after dominant Ted Musgrave fell out of contention with a flat tire.

Last year: Bobby Hamilton outlasted Musgrave to win the Craftsman 200 at Darlington, giving him both victories in the season.

Next race: Ford 200, Nov. 19, Homestead, Fla.

INDY RACING

Last race: Hello Castroneves picked up his first victory in the 200-mile season-ending Chevy 500 at Texas Motor Speedway. Tony Stewart and Tony Kanaan finished second and third, respectively, while Castroneves had a season.

CHAMP CARS

Last race: Sebastian Bourdais overcame a spin and a sticky gearbox to win the Chevy Chase 200 at Texas Motor Speedway. Tony Kanaan finished second and third, respectively, while Bourdais had a season.

FORMULA ONE

Last race: Juan Pablo Montoya won in his final race for Williams-BMW, beating Kimi Raikkonen in the Brazilian Grand Prix on Oct. 24.

SPORTS



James, Ilgauskas lead Cavaliers
to overtime victory over
previously undefeated Suns, Page 28

Instant replay for baseball?

Giving topic another look on agenda for major league GMs

BY BEN WALKER
The Associated Press

KEY BISCAVNE, Fla. — Brian Cashman wanted to make this perfectly clear: The umpires were correct when they called Alex Rodriguez out for interference on that crazy play during the AL Championship Series.

"They got it completely right, 100 percent," the New York Yankees' general manager said this week. "But you would hate to have a game, or a series or even a season come down to a play where they miss it and instant replay could have helped.

"So as far as instant replay, I'm in favor of it."

Now, after a pennant race and postseason dotted with reversed rulings, baseball will get another chance to see who else wants to give replay a look.

The topic was on the agenda for Thursday in the GM meetings. And there seems to be growing support among teams to join the NFL, NBA and NHL in using instant replay on calls such as fair or foul and homer or not, but definitely not balls and strikes.

"I think its time has come," Milwaukee assistant Gord Ash said. "The technology has improved and is there. I think there's a place for it."

Even if replay comes up for a formal vote — it did not go very far last year when GMs debated it — there's no assurance it would show up during games anytime soon.

"I don't see it," Bob Watson, vice president of on-field operations, said Wednesday. "And I don't think the commissioner is in favor of it, either."

Earlier in the day, GMs were

briefed on plans to play a spring training game next March in Athens — Baltimore probably would be involved — and efforts to hold a World Cup-style tournament in early 2006.

They also talked about letting teams trade first-round draft choices and were told to be vigilant in verifying the ages of players signed in the Dominican Republic and Venezuela.

But with so many procedural issues to sift through this week, the prospect of adding instant replay is intriguing.

The Cincinnati Reds asked that replay be included on the agenda.

Their executives have talked about it internally for a couple of years, and they've heard from other clubs lately.

"I think there seems to be some level of understanding that getting the play right is what underscores this thought process," Reds GM Dan O'Brien said. "I don't think any of us have any idea of a timetable."

Said Brad Kullman, the Reds' director of major league operations: "It doesn't make sense that you might have a million fans out there watching on TV and knowing what happened while the umpires huddle without that benefit."

That said, there's no guarantee that umpires would want it.

"My sense is no," said former umpire Richie Garcia, now an umpire supervisor. "I think we'd be fooling around with something that would take away from the game."

"Baseball is very traditional, but I'm not going to rule it out," he said.

SEE REPLAY ON PAGE 29

Not so fast



Philadelphia 76ers' Allen Iverson runs into New Jersey Nets' Alonzo Mourning during the second half Wednesday in Philadelphia. Iverson later hit the tying jumper with 7.2 seconds remaining in regulation, and the Sixers went on to a 108-100 victory in overtime. See details in NBA roundup on Page 28.

**Minnesota
left-hander
Santana
unanimous winner
of AL Cy Young**

Page 29



**Racing Stripes:
Nextel Cup chase
a four-man race
with only two
races remaining**

Page 31



**No. 12 Louisville
rolls up 587 yards,
rides big early
lead to convincing
victory over TCU**

Page 25

NASCAR lifts long-standing ban on hard-liquor ads on cars Page 30